

**Saudi researchers' perspectives on the ethics of  
children's participation in research: an  
exploration using Q-methodology**

A thesis submitted to the University of  
Manchester for the degree of PhD in the Faculty  
of Humanities

**2016**

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Word Count Excluding the References, Figures, Tables and Appendices is: 71,497

## **Abstract**

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), little is known about Saudi educational researchers' perspectives concerning the issue of ethics when recruiting children to participate in research. It has come to light that researchers use children to collect their data from but do not give them the opportunity to express their wishes regarding participation in that research, and no ethical consent form is specifically required for children's use unless the topic of research is sensitive. Accordingly, in the context of KSA, this research aims at identifying and exploring educational researchers' perspectives about children's rights when conducting research with children.

This research used two methods: Q-methodology and interview. Q-methodology was used to determine the viewpoints of educational researchers working in education departments at two universities in Riyadh city in the KSA (King Saud University and Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University). Fifty-two (52) female educational researchers sorted 54 Q-methodology statements, according to personal opinion, ranging from (+5) most agree to (-5) most disagree, while the interviews were conducted with three policymakers from the National Commission for Childhood and the Ministry of Education. Following analysis of the data, a number of findings were identified from the Q analysis, five factors, and the interview analysis: the need for more childhood and children's rights studies; the challenges facing researchers when including children as research participants; the weak belief pertaining to children's capabilities; the low level of awareness of children's participation rights and how the ethics process is in the KSA. These findings illustrate the acceptance of ethics as a process in research. Finally, the effectiveness of using Q-methodology as an approach was confirmed.

This research is in a position to inform the Saudi research community and policymakers about current understandings and practices in terms of children's participation in research. The viewpoints that emerged strongly indicate agreement with the concept of ethics when children participate in research. Educational researchers call for ethics guidelines and for them to be compulsory in the KSA and, more significantly, policymakers support their demand.

## **Declaration**

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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## **Acknowledgments**

Firstly, my gratitude and thanks are to All Mighty God for the ability that He has given me to carry out this study successfully.

I would like to thank the members of staff at The University of Manchester for all the exciting new learning that I have been able to experience. I would especially like to thank my supportive supervisors, **Pauline Prevett** and **Liz Smith**, for the time and effort they have put into helping me individually to prepare this study. Without their support and advice I would not have been able to complete the work. I would also like to thank **Dr. Raja Bahatheg**, from King Saud University for her support and guidance over the fieldwork stage; without her help and advice this study would not exist.

Additionally I am thankful to those who have contributed to this research by participating in the Q-methodology sort and the interviews.

I am extremely grateful to my family - **my parents** who believed in education for women and inspired and encouraged me to pursue my education. I know they have suffered from my absence all these years but they have been patient just because they wanted me to achieve my dream and to be proud of their youngest daughter.

Last, but not least, I am very grateful to my friend, **Dr. Sharifa Al- Harthy** for her advice and help since the beginning of this study and until the end. Also, a big thanks for my best friend **Thuraya Al-Hosni** throughout my PhD journey for all her unlimited support to learn and face our challenges together. She was extremely supportive during this time, despite her own busy schedule.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.A Introduction

The aim of this research is to identify the perspectives of educational researchers and policymakers towards the ethics of children participating in research. It uses Q-methodology to determine the perspectives of educational researchers working in education departments at different universities in Riyadh city in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). It reveals their different perspectives pertaining to the completion of research with children, from an ethical standpoint, and further examines the similarities and differences between the perspectives. In an effort to understand the policy context of educational researchers' perspectives, interviews were also conducted with policymakers from the National Commission for Childhood (NCC) and the Ministry of Education (MOE). As a result of this research study, the researcher aims to be in a position to inform the Saudi community about current understandings and practices about children's participation in research and related ethical issues.

The issue of exploring participants' perspectives has been a controversial and much disputed subject within the field of social science. Brown (2004, p. 332) illustrates the importance of studying people's perspectives as:

*Understanding the nature of beliefs, attitudes, and values is essential to understanding future administrators' choices, decision, and effectiveness regarding issues of diversity, social justice, and equity.*

According to the quotation above I see it as my research aim to achieve understanding about equity in the research process in order to contribute to future administrative guidelines. I highlight the issue of equity within the children's rights concept; this is considered the main area for this research which is to show how dealing with children as human and social actors in society by recruiting them to participate in research to allow their voice to heard, will achieve equity for this group in the Saudi community. For this study, I use the term perspective: '*a particular way of seeing something*' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2012, p. 536), to mean people's opinions about ethical issues; do they agree with this idea or disagree, and various shades in between? Also, this study seeks to identify the similarities and/or differences between the perspectives

of educational researchers, as well as between educational researchers and policymakers towards the ethics of children's participation in research.

## **1.B Rationale**

My motivation for conducting this research stems from my background as an educational researcher at King Saud University (KSU) and my MA in International Childhood Studies (University of Sheffield). I was employed at KSU as an educational researcher during the period 2003–2008; during this time, I worked on initial teacher training (Bachelor) programmes for the early years (birth until six years of age). Whilst studying for an MA, children were included as participants in my dissertation research, and subsequently I developed an awareness of ethical issues with which, hitherto, I had been unfamiliar. Consequently, the decision was made to pursue this interest and deepen the understanding of researchers' perspectives towards the ethics of researching with children. The desire was centred on seeking answers to the questions:

'What are Saudi educational researchers' understandings and practices in relation to children's participation in research?' and

'For those who have studied in the KSA/abroad, how appropriate have they found the ethical guidelines they have studied for the Saudi context?'

## **1.C Why is it an important topic?**

I found two main reasons to emphasise the importance of this area of research.

### ***1.C.1 To direct more attention to the children's right as a voice issue***

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Article 12 states that: '*children should have the right to express their views on any topic and share their knowledge with others*', whilst Article 13 gives children '*the right to share or get information as long as this information is not damaging to them or to others*' (The Welsh Government's UNCRC Website, 2011). As a result of submissions to the UNCRC, each country has to provide a five-yearly report to the UNCRC to show how it has implemented all Articles (Bin Said, 2007; Payne, 2009). The last report of Saudi Arabia (2006–2010) stated that the government should focus more on Article 12 because progress has been limited, particularly for girls.



### ***1.C.2 To increase awareness of research ethics with children in the KSA***

In general, there is a lack of childhood studies in the KSA, as identified by Bashatah (2011), as well as a lack of awareness pertaining to research ethics. Research ethics are centred on respecting and protecting participants (Alderson & Morrow, 2011); therefore, ethical considerations can adjust the relationship between the researcher and the child in research (Punch, 2002). Saudi researchers investigating research ethics in the KSA recommend: (a) more attention be directed to research ethics by the government; (b) raising research ethics awareness amongst the Saudi community; and (c) forming ethical guidelines for researchers (Al-Habib & Abukarem, 2012).

I undertook three pilot studies (see Chapter 4: Methodology) and, as a result, attention was shifted away from exploring researchers' preparation for experiences of conducting research with children, to a narrower focus on capturing researchers' perspectives and understandings of *Children's right to a voice in the context of the KSA and ethical issues in research with children*. For this research the pilot studies helped me to design the research questions by providing a strong theoretical framework (see section 4.F.1 *Developing a Comprehensive Set of Statements (Q-set)*, p. 80) and that lead me to identify two research questions:

*RQ1: What are the perspectives of educational researchers and policymakers towards the ethics of children's participation in research?*

*RQ2: What lessons emerge about the ethics of children's participation in research for the educational researchers, policymakers, children and children's parents?*

By answering these two questions, this study identifies a number of perspectives relating to research ethics when children participate in educational research, and further support a better understanding of how such perspectives relate to issues of implementing children's rights policies in research in the KSA.

## 1.D Chapter outlines

This research is presented across six further chapters.

**Chapter 2: *The Saudi Context.*** This chapter presents a brief background to the KSA in general, discusses the education system in the KSA, and then focuses on the higher education system owing to the fact the research participants are from this latter sector. Also, this chapter explains the context of the organisations from which the participants come, namely King Saud University (KSU) and Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University (PNU). An overview of the NCC has also been provided in regard to its role in the KSA. Finally, the ethical issues in research in the KSA are discussed.

**Chapter 3: *Literature Review.*** This chapter is divided into three main areas: children's rights, which is considered the overarching theme of the study, before moving on to the participation rights focus of Articles 12 and 13 from the UNCRC, and ending with the ethics concept when children participate in research. Each of these areas and their related concepts is discussed in detail. After this, the chapter describes how the research aspects are explored, and further identifies the gap in the existing knowledge of the research subject. The chapter ends by stating how this study will fill this gap by answering the main research questions.

**Chapter 4: *Methodology.*** This chapter presents two methods: Q-methodology and interview. The main method for this study is the Q-methodology since it is considered a new method for the Saudi research community; thus, it is explained in detail. The chapter begins by providing an overview of the study design, the researcher's own position as an educational researcher, as a person and as a professional working at a university. A comprehensive description of Q-methodology as a method and why it was chosen as a tool for this research then follows. The steps for implementing the Q-methodology are presented, including the theoretical framework for the Q-statements and the data analysis section, which showcases how the data are analysed by the PQMethod software. The discussion moves on to the second method—the interview. It explicates the participant samples, the interview type, and how the samples were obtained. The data analysis is described and how the themes arose from this through the thematic analysis process adopted. The ethical considerations and trustworthiness section ends the chapter with the strength and limitations for the study.

**Chapter 5: Data Analysis.** Chapter 5 presents the analysis process for both methods—the Q-methodology and the interview. Regarding the Q-methodology, as the main method for the study, the beginning of the chapter explains the PQMethod software and how it works with the data. The process is divided into how the data are entered into the software: the factor extraction, factor rotation and, at the end, factor arrays. The chapter shows how the data are interpreted by presenting the distinguishing and consensus statements, the demographic information, the crib sheet for each factor showing the participants' comments from the questionnaires and interviews according to their Q-sorting for the 'most agree' and 'most disagree' statements. In addition, all information is collected to interpret each factor in a qualitative way, and further shows the participants' comments after they had completed their Q-sorting. Finally, the interview results are presented by answering each question, and the participants' answers are compared in the interview summary section.

**Chapter 6: Discussion.** This chapter organises the findings and answers the research questions. It is divided into three sections: the first links the findings from the educational researchers and policy makers with the literature review, which answers the first research question; the second section demonstrates the differences and similarities among the viewpoints of the educational researchers, and between the educational researchers' perspectives and the policymakers' perspectives towards the ethics of children's participation in research. The final section answers the second research question by presenting the implications for all who participate in any research process, whether educational researchers, the children's parents, children themselves, and policymakers.

**Chapter 7: Conclusion.** This is the last chapter in the thesis, and it presents the conclusion of the whole thesis, stating the research findings and the contribution to knowledge made by this research study. Summarising the findings based on the research questions, recommendations are also made for further research, which can be undertaken in the KSA and worldwide. The last two sections set out some standards which confirm the good quality of this research and my personal reflections about the entire process of implementing this research.

## **1.E Summary**

This chapter has presented the research aim, rationale, and reasons for choosing this research topic and has shown the definitions of the term ‘perspective’. It has also presented a brief outline of each chapter. The next chapter informs the reader about the Saudi context by highlighting the background of the country, and explaining the education system in general with the focus on higher education, as it is the education system of the study. Finally it looks at the committee that has the responsibility for the children’s rights issues in the KSA.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE CONTEXT OF THE EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN SAUDI ARABIA**

#### **2.A Introduction**

There is increasing focus on research programmes and published output in the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia. Increasing emphasis on research has influenced this study to consider the significance of educational researchers and ethical issues relating to children. The aim of this chapter is to provide some degree of insight into the development of the education system in KSA in general, and higher education in particular.

#### **2.B The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932; the major ethnicity is Arab and Arabic is the official language. Most Saudi people are Muslims (Rugh, 2002). Saudi Arabia means different things to different people: on the one hand, it is the ultimate Holy Land and pilgrimage destination for followers of Islam worldwide while on the other hand, because of its oil reserves, it is considered to be the land of opportunities for a large number of expatriates from Asia, Europe and the United States (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2015). Saudi Arabia is recognised as the largest country in the Gulf region, with a population in excess of 29 million according to the CDSI website for 2012. Of this number, around 20 million are Saudi nationals (Central Department of Statistics Information, 2012). The country sits in the southwest corner of Asia and is at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa. From the West, it is bounded by the Red Sea, with Yemen and Oman to the South, the Arabian Gulf and the United Arab Emirates and Qatar to the East, and to the North Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2015). The country's capital city is Al-Riyadh; however, it is not possible to ignore Makkah, which is the holiest city for all Muslim people. Makkah is the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad, and the main point is Hajj, the Islamic pilgrimage, in which almost two million Muslims from all parts of the world participate every year (Ministry of Economy And Planning, 2015).

## **2.C The education system in the KSA**

There is no doubt that the educational purpose of any group of people or society most often reflects their cultural norms and way of living (AL-Abdalkareem's project, no date). The educational system in the KSA, established according to Islamic philosophy, is consistent with its culture and is built on its accompanying customs and traditions (UNESCO, 2010/11; AL-Abdalkareem's project, no date). Each country has a vision and message for their education system, and the vision of the Saudi education system is concerned with building a knowledgeable and competitive society, on a global scale, with the message to provide educational opportunities for all in an appropriate learning environment. This vision and mission, in light of Saudi educational policy, seeks to raise the quality of its output, increase the effectiveness of scientific research to encourage creativity and innovation, and to achieve the development of social partnerships through upgrading the skills and capabilities of those employed in education (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2015).

Education in Saudi Arabia is gender-separated, as set out by the Saudi Education Policy Article 155, which requires strict separation between males and females, at all education grades, with four exceptions: kindergarten, nursery, some private elementary schools, and some medical schools in universities (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). What is more, all preschool teachers are female and they have face-to-face contact with the children's mothers; however, if they need to contact the fathers, they can contact them by phone only. This reflects Saudi culture in the education system (Al-Rabiah, 2008), and follows the education policy article. Although all preschool teachers are females, the attendance is mixed at this level and the children then are separated in elementary school (Gahwaji, 2006). Nowadays, there are some mixed elementary schools, but only for the first, second and third grades; however, all the teachers are female at these schools.

Children in the KSA are considered the foundation of the development process, and the KSA has directed many of its efforts towards giving every child a chance to have their rights. Therefore, it ratified the UNCRC in 1996, which stipulates the provision of different types of care, one of which is education (National Commission for Childhood, 2003). Article 28 of the Convention is concerned with this and states that:

*Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries*

*should help poorer countries achieve this* (The Welsh Government's UNCRRC Website, 2011).

Al-Rasheed (the previous Minister of Education) made the point, at the United Nations (2002), that children in Saudi Arabia have free education, and that it is available to all groups, including those who have special needs. In his paper 'Education for All', Al-Shaer (2007) mentions that one of the Saudi aims for children is free, quality and compulsory education by 2015. Although education in the KSA is not compulsory it is available to all and the government has the responsibility for providing all facilities at all stages, and further gives allowances in some situations (Zedan, 1980), such as for postgraduate students at universities. Also, in the 7<sup>th</sup> Development Plan of the KSA in 2005 it was mentioned that although education is not yet compulsory, boys and girls should attend elementary grade school (National Commission for Childhood, 2003).

Saudi Arabia, as a country, contributed, by paper, to the 'Education for All by 2015: Will we make it?' report by Al-Shaer (2007, p. 1), which identified education for all as: '*the provision of basic education to those of suitable age*'. Furthermore, the aim is centred on offering a foundation education for all ages by 2015 and to achieve the Education of All aim, as discussed at the Dakar Conference (2000) in Al-Shaer's (2007) paper. The KSA planned to increase development at all education levels (Al-Shaer, 2007) and, based on this, the number of students of both genders in general education increased from 536,400 in (1969/70) to 5.4 million students in 2013, showing a yearly growth rate of 5.4% (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2015).

## **2.D Higher education in the KSA**

The majority of data pertaining to the higher education system in the KSA are quantitative, from different ministries, with only limited qualitative data collected from the system (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in the KSA was established in 1975 to oversee planning, organising and supervising the higher education system only; the Minister undertakes the responsibility of implementing government policy (Ministry of Education, 2015). What is more, the MOE is considered a centralist system, with its work carried out under four specialist centres:

*The National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education (NCHAE) which oversees standard tests for entry to Saudi universities; the National Commission*

*for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) which has responsibility for the achievement of quality standards in Saudi universities; the Centre for Higher Education Statistics which collects and analyses quantitative data about the higher education sector; and the Centre for Higher Education Research and Studies (CHERS) which undertakes system-level research for the purpose of informing both policy and practice (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013, p. 4).*

In 2015, however, the MOE and the MOHE were merged into the MOE (Ministry of Education, 2015); prior to this merger however, the latest statistics, from the Ministry of Economy and Planning (2015), show that the enrolment of both genders increased approximately eight-fold, from 172,600 in 1993/1994 to 1.4 million in 2013.

In general, higher education requires significant funding. In the KSA, this depends on the government; however, the findings of researchers and international conferences stress the difficulty associated with the expansion of unlimited government funding, where they have to find another solution to support this level of funding (Al-Hamid *et al.*, 2005). Consequently, universities are working on increasing their resources as a result of the services that can be provided to others, such as establishing research institutes that can provide scientific and consultation studies inside and outside the country. Also, nowadays, the government has begun to allow universities to accept gifts, donations and endowments (Al-Hamed *et al.*, 2005). An example is the significant amount of money that private businesses give to universities to support them, such as in the form of research chairs (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013).

When writing about higher education, there is the need to use the term 'universities and colleges', of which there are presently 34 in the KSA (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2015). Of these, 25 universities are public and nine are private, with all the private universities having been established in the last decade (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013; Mihael, 2015). All universities provide their instructions in Arabic languages, but in the medical fields of public and private universities and for the students in the preparatory year, English guidelines are used. What is more, the private universities are smaller than the public ones, have fewer fields of study than public ones, and focus on undergraduate degrees (Mihael, 2015). It is worth mentioning that all universities have two sections, namely male and female, apart from two single-gender universities—King Fahd University for Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) in Dhahran, which is only for males, and Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU) in Riyadh, which is just for females (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). Regarding the provision of college and



university programmes, there are two-year diploma programmes from colleges of technology. The Bachelor's degree spans four years for most fields, but five years for architecture, agriculture, pharmacy and veterinary, five to six years for dentistry and a full six years for medicine and law programmes. For postgraduate students, there is a one-year higher diploma in education that qualifies the person to teach. A Master's degree is two years in some departments and four years in others. The two-year Master's programme has one year of modules with the second year aimed at the dissertation, whilst the four-year programme comprises two years of modules and two years for research, whereas the doctoral degree is more than four years (UNESCO, 2010/11). However, as a large country, Saudi Arabia does not base higher education only in universities (public or private); there are also community colleges, girls' colleges, industrial and vocational institutes, and colleges of technology (Mihael, 2015).

## **2.E Organisation regulations for faculty member employees of Saudi universities**

Each faculty has a different hierarchy; the main members are professors, associate professors and assistant professors. There also are lecturers, teacher assistants, research assistants and language teachers, all of whom follow the same regulations but are considered subsidiaries (Higher Education Council, 2006). In this respect, assistant professors have to hold a PhD, lecturers and language teachers require a Master's degree, teacher assistants need a Bachelor's degree, and research assistants should hold either Bachelor's or Master's degrees. Faculty standards for promotion are dependent on three standards: teaching, publication, and university and community service (Higher Education Council, 2006). What is more, in order to move from an assistant professor to an associate professor, four additional years of extra research is needed after receiving their last degree. The lecturer, who has a Master's degree only, can teach at Saudi universities, but their faculty encourages them to undertake PhD study after five years or they will move them to the administration section at which point they leave teaching. Also, some universities allow a teaching assistant who holds a Bachelor's degree with excellent marks, to teach (Al-Ghamdi & Tight, 2013). However, because of the high numbers of students enrolled in Saudi universities compared with staff numbers, many department staff focus more on teaching than on undertaking research activities (Alnassar & Dow, 2013). Although research is important, as Abdul Hai (2009)

mentions, the role of the university is to both teach students and publish research, and it is with this in mind that the university regulations are provided. However, research and the volume of this research is the measurement of the development of a university's level. Such content is considered the standard for comparison between universities (Abdul Hai, 2009).

## **2.F Research productivity in the KSA's universities**

In general, the success of educational research helps higher education to play a development role. Thus, universities represent themselves as education and research centres, with their research conducted via three routes: research by postgraduate students; studies and research from the university's research centre, and the external centres directly linked with universities (Al-frejat, 2011). Accordingly, most Saudi universities have a Deanship of Scientific Research (DSR) in their organisational structure. The role of this Deanship is to support research that is based in any institution. Each university is given a generous amount of funding to support the research projects of academic staff. Moreover, it provides aid for new educational researcher members, at each faculty, for the small projects that start their research careers. What is more, nowadays, many Saudi universities support their main funding by Research Chairs, which can offer aid to university members and postdoctoral students in leading their projects (Al-Ohali & Shin, 2013). In addition, the Ministry of Economy and Planning (2015, p. 160) mention that:

*The sources of revenue of the fund consist of the fees decided by the government and the support provided by it. Other sources include grants, assistance and endowments that the board of Directors decide their acceptance; returns on investments of the Fund's resources; fees for services offered; and payments collected by the Fund from its lending activities.*

However, on the one hand, Al-Ohali and Shin (2013, p. 98) state that:

*the publication output of Saudi academics has increased rapidly in recent years as the government has invested more heavily in research and development (R&D) (which now comprises 1.1% of GDP). In 1975, only 25 articles by Saudi academics reached international publication: in 2010 this number has risen to 3063.*

On the other hand, Abdul Hai (2009) refers to the research situation and postulates that the problem in Arabic countries is not the funding, but rather the lack of belief in the importance of research. Moreover, research by university members in Arabic countries

represents just 5% of their functional requirements, whereas it is 33% in developed countries (Al-frejat, 2011). According to Al-frejat (2011), the research list for the last two years at KSU, from the research centre of the female section of the humanities departments, shows the number of members' publications amounting to 78 publications, four of which were books whilst the rest were research papers, with the majority of research using quantitative methods (KSU, 2014). Thus, research publication at Saudi universities is considered low, despite the wide-ranging efforts and funding provided for research and projects. However, the annual production of publications for the KSA is higher than that of some countries in the Middle East, such as Morocco, Turkey and Jordan (Al-Ohali & Shin, 2013).

In the KSA, researchers draw on children to collect data but do not afford them the opportunity to express themselves, for example Aseri's dissertation (2010), implemented in the KSA, explored the role of the classroom environment to develop maths concepts for the preschool child (5–6 years old). Aseri recruited 98 children from eight preschools, and used checklist observations to answer the research questions without asking them whether or not they wanted to participate. What is more, as another issue, there is a lack of application regarding different or new methods in research, such as in regards to the Q-methodology used in this study. More traditional methods are preferred, such as in the cases of interview and questionnaire, when researchers want to explore perspectives or attitudes. Studies that measure attitude using quantitative methods, such as the questionnaire (Punch, 2011), or qualitative methods, such as the interview, are recognised as vital methods to demonstrate participants' perspectives (Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Punch, 2011). An example of the use of traditional methods with children can be seen when considering Al-Nofaie (2010) who studied the attitudes of intermediate Saudi students towards the use of the Arabic language in English classes through the application of three methods: questionnaire, semi-structured interview and semi-structured observation (including a checklist and some notes). Neither study indicated any kind of ethical consideration when children participated in the research, just a permit from the Ministry of Education to the school head teacher to allow the researchers access to the schools to carry out their fieldwork.

## **2.G Ethical issues in research in the KSA**

Unfortunately, at the time of writing, the implementation of ethical guidelines when children participate in research in the KSA has been somewhat vague and lacking (Saudi stakeholder's interview from the pilot study -1-, 2013, Appendix 1). In Saudi studies that have been conducted in the KSA, researchers have not mentioned ethical guidelines associated with their research in their methodologies; they have just explained how the sample is identified and from where, and how their instruments were designed. An example is Aseri (2010) dissertation, where she included children in her study as mentioned above (section 2.F Research Productivity in the KSA's Universities, p.26). She does not mention, even in the appendices, whether or not ethical approval letters or consent forms were distributed to and/or collected from any participants; she merely presented a letter from the Ministry of Education to the schools stating that she wanted to include their children as participants in her study. When asked in an informal chat about permission from the children and their parents, she answered:

*the rule in the KSA is just to ask the head teacher of the school to get permission, I do not know if they asked children's parents and definitely they did not ask the children (Informal conversation with Aseri, October 28, 2013).*

However, Kellett (2005) recommends that, even if the children are aged five, and maybe cannot sign to give their consent, it is their right to have the idea of the research explained to them and their role in it. What is more, a Saudi stakeholder working at the MOE, when asked about ethical issues with children participating in research in the KSA, answered:

*the parents' permission for children to participate in research is not a requirement for all kinds of research, that means it depends on the kind of research. For example, if the research is to measure children's skills in any curriculum, the parent's permission is not required. It is important if the research is about a sensitive issue like child abuse for example.*

She also mentioned:

*There is no consent form from the Ministry of Education to get permission from the parents, the researchers themselves have to write one and present it with their request when they want the children to participate in research (Informal email from stakeholder, October 28, 2013).*

## **2.H The National Commission for Childhood (NCC)**

In 2006, the Saudi National Commission for Childhood was established in Riyadh city with the aim of building relationships between government agencies, such as the Ministry of Education, and children's institutions, such as schools. It also aims at improving children's welfare, creating connections between private intuitions and the government to improve children's programmes, and creating a database of children's studies in the Kingdom (UNESCO, 2010/11). Moreover, in 2006, the MOCEP programme was implemented in the KSA to '*educate and train the mother and prepare the child for school*' (p. 33), but was only applied in three cities in the KSA, one being Riyadh (Faour & Suwaigh, 2010).

This current research seeks to address the issue of the lack of ethical guidelines when recruiting children to participate in research. The study sample is taken from two highly regarded universities in Saudi Arabia - namely KSA and PNU. The following section presents a background to these two universities.

## **2.I King Saud University (KSU)**

The KSU was established in 1957 in Riyadh city, and is considered the foundation stone of higher education. It is the oldest and largest university according to student enrolment, faculty numbers, graduate programmes and the number of schools and fields of study (Rugh, 2002; Al-Aqeel, 2005). Moreover, it offers Bachelor's degrees in all fields, Master's degrees in more than 75 fields, and PhD study in some fields, whereas the education school offers a higher diploma in education. What is more, in 1976, females were given the opportunity to study at the university which accordingly established a Centre of University Studies for Girls, which provides many fields in different schools, such as education, business, literature, computing, dentistry, medicine and pharmacy. Interestingly, the KSU's library is considered one of the largest in the Arabic world (Al-Aqeel, 2005; Al-Hamid *et al.*, 2005).

The mission of KSU is to provide quality education, and to facilitate the production of creative research that will help to build a knowledge-based economy. This will be achieved by creating a conducive environment for learning and intellectual creativity, employing and optimising technology, and local and international partnerships. The

vision for this university is globalisation and leadership to build a knowledge society (KSU, 2015). Internationally,

*KSU arguably has become the most highly regarded university in the kingdom, attracting substantial private donation and building the largest endowment in the history of Saudi higher education (Al-Eisa & Smith, 2013. p. 31).*

## **2.J Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU)**

The PNU is the first women's university in the KSA. Established in 1970 as a college for females, subsequently it successively opened 102 colleges in the KSA between university colleges and university community colleges, distributed across 72 cities with an enrolment of 600,000 students. In Riyadh city, there were six colleges for humanities, scientific, education, social work, home economics and arts. In 2006, all these colleges, as well as others in different fields, were combined under one university, Riyadh University. In 2011, they transferred to a new and huge campus, and the name was changed to PNU. The PNU now has 40,000 students and 12,000 staff (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013; PNU, 2015). Its vision is to be a key source of knowledge and value for women, whilst the mission is that this university is built as a comprehensive university for women to willingly provide educational and scientific research, and to contribute to building a knowledge-based economy and global community partnerships (PNU, 2015).

## **2.K Summary**

This chapter has set the background to KSA as a country, and explicated the nature of the current education system. The next chapter presents what the researcher found about the study's areas; children's rights, participation rights and the ethics concept, internationally and in the KSA specifically.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.A Introduction

For this chapter, I searched different sources. I began searching Google Scholar in both English and Arabic, using keywords for each section to determine whether there exist sufficient references. In actual fact I found, in English, a significant number as the keyword is general. Subsequently, I started to enclose the keywords ‘Saudi Arabia’, but the results were surprising as there were not much data. Accordingly, I changed my keywords for different countries and found many articles and reports. After that, I began to search in different databases, such as Scopus and ProQuest, for data spanning the period 1990–2016. However, disappointingly, I noted there was not much literature, either in Arabic or English, relating to my topic in Saudi Arabia; there is a notable lack, which supports one of the findings from my MA research (Bashatah, 2011). Thus, I decided to investigate the issue in different countries and accordingly identify how they have attempted to make implementations in practice. Thus, the literature reviewed is a mix of books, policy documents, policy reports, original research and articles; however, in the Saudi section, I had to depend on policy documents and reports only, because of the lack of studies in this area.

#### 3.B Children’s rights

The aim of this part of the literature review is to provide some historical policy background on children’s rights and accordingly to provide a broad picture of how the application of the UNCRC has differed in different regions of the world. In this literature review the UNCRC is also referred to as the CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child) by a number of authors and this researcher maintains their original usage. The discussion addresses the historical perspective on children’s rights, defines the keyword ‘right’, presents an overview of Articles 12 and 13 of the UNCRC overseas, and sets out a summarised overview of the participation of children, thus allowing their voices to be heard.

### ***3.B.1 Historical perspective on children's rights***

In the new global economy, the concept of human rights has become a central issue on the United Nations (UN) agenda (Manna, 2006). Kanyal (2014) claim that “.. this convention was critical to establishing agreement between countries on the rights granted to children’ to improve their lives.”p.10. Thus, there is strong belief within the UN concerning the importance and value of human rights (Manna, 2006).

But the question is, what does human rights mean?

Human rights is concerned with improving the level of life in a wide and free environment for all people (Manna, 2006). Since childhood is the first step in a person’s life, this period should receive great attention in order for the child to grow up to live an appropriate life (Al-Otaibi, 2008). Despite the importance of this period, children around the world have suffered as a result of the violence, neglect and abuse they have faced (Al-Otaibi, 2008). In order to put a stop to this suffering, and to protect children on a worldwide scale, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) was established in 1919 to stop child labour, which is recognised as the first step in the defence of childhood (Fass, 2011). The next step was in 1942, when the Geneva Declaration set out that every child has the right to protection and to be provided with the best of everything, regardless of gender, nationality or religion ( James & James, 2004; Manna, 2006; Payne, 2009; Fass, 2011). Then, in 1959, the UN introduced the concept of children’s rights; however, the content and meaning of the entitlements was unclear (Payne, 2009). In 1978, the UN Human Rights Commission was developed, with the Children’s Rights Commission developed 10 years later (Payne, 2009). Thus, on 20 November 1989, the UN announced the separation of children’s rights from human rights, and further established the UNCRC (Roose & Bouverne-De Bie, 2007; Al-Otabie, 2008). Many researchers (Al-Otaibi, 2008; Payne, 2009; Fass, 2011) claim that the UNCRC has induced massive improvements to the lives of children. Fass (2011, p.18) considers 1978 as ‘*the year of the child*’ and, based on this, in 1979, the UN established Child Day (Al-Otaibi, 2008).

It is further worth mentioning that, by 2002, 191 countries had ratified the UNCRC into their legislation. Somalia was the last country to ratify the UNCRC in 2002 because of ongoing government instability, and the only country that has not authorised it is the USA (Freeman, 2000; James & James, 2004; Gray, 2012). Libal *et al.* (2011, p.367)



reveal in their article that ‘... *the United States has failed to join the treaty*’. From an eastern perspective Qtran (2015) found that all Arab countries have ratified the CRC with a total of 196 countries across the world—the most recent one being Somalia in October 2015. Thus, only the United States is certified, even though they have been signed up since February 1995.

Since the UNCRC was signed in 1989, increasing attention has been directed towards the importance of children’s issues worldwide (James & James, 2004). At this time, the UNCRC was established for various reasons, including to protect any human being (child) aged from birth to 18 years old, with this age group agreed upon by the UNCRC (Libal *et al.*, 2011), and to focus on giving children their rights. As can be seen from the literature these aims are continuous, even at the present time. Moreover, another key aim for the establishment of the UNCRC was concerned with increasing the focus on children’s issues around the world (James & James, 2004); and to provide every child, from birth to 18 years of age, their full and complete rights in different aspects (Payne, 2009; Libal *et al.*, 2011). However, the UNCRC was set up with the intention of supporting those who are interested in children’s issues or those who work with children (Lyon, 2007).

As a result of a country committing to the UNCRC, it has to provide a report every five years to show how they are implementing the various articles (Bin-Said, 2007; Payne, 2009; Libal *et al.*, 2011). The UNCRC contains 54 articles, all of which are classified into different sections: for instance, Articles 1–42 deal with issues involving the child, whereas Articles 43–54 relate to issues concerning the relationship type between the government and people who provide the rights to the child (The Welsh Government’s UNCRC Website, 2011). Along the same lines, James and James (2008) illustrate that the UNCRC has divided the rights into three aspects: provision rights, protection rights and participation rights. Roose and Bouverne-De Bie (2007) define each right as follows: the provision right is providing physical needs, such as those laid out in Article 6, which states that, ‘*all children have the right of life, government should ensure that children survive and develop healthily*’ (The Welsh Government’s UNCRC Website, 2011). In relation to protection rights, Roose and Bouverne-De Bie (2007) mention that these types of rights are aimed at protecting children from harm, such as Article 36, which emphasises that ‘*children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development*’ (The Welsh Government’s UNCRC Website, 2011). Finally, the

participation right is concerned with giving children opportunities to make decisions, such as those stated in Article 12 (Roose & Bouverne-De Bie, 2007), highlighting that: *‘children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account’* (The Welsh Government’s UNCRC Website, 2011). However, the idea of inserting a human rights concept in an education programme for children would increase their awareness about their rights. Increasing children’s awareness of their right is considered one of the UK’s steps to implementing the UNCRC article as: *‘it is important to instil with children knowledge and awareness about human rights as a general social objective, but also it is a key part of the UK’s obligations under the Convention’* (Dunhill, 2016, p. 2).

### **3.B.2 What does right(s) mean?**

Children must have rights as human beings, even if these rights are not the same as those afforded to adults (James & James, 2008). The definition of the ‘right(s)’ concept, as James and James (2008, p. 109) mention is: *‘... justifiable on legal or moral grounds to have or obtain something, or to act in a certain way’*. Al-Otaibi (2008) defines ‘right(s)’ as what has been decided for any person to have regardless of the circumstances of time and place, whereas the Arab Council of Childhood and Development (2011) sets ‘right(s)’ as the standard entitlement determined from competent authority or legitimate sources in any country. The Arab Council for Childhood and Development is an Arabic development non-government organisation with legal responsibility for childhood and taking care of children’s issues.

### **3.B.3 Overview of Article 12 and Article 13 of the UNCRC**

Article 12, as set out in The Welsh Government’s UNCRC Website (2011), states the following:

*Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.*

Article 13 states that:

*Children have the right to get and to share information as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.*

On the one hand, listening to young children has been achieved clearly from Articles 12 and 13 of the UNCRC. Children’s voices can be heard, by their decision to participate

in research, as per Article 12, and children's participation during the research process is an implementation of Article 13 (Mukherji & Albon, 2011). Morrow (2008) and Cocks (2006) consider that the child's right to be researched is built on Article 12, by respecting them and on Article 13 in terms of listening to their voices. Furthermore, Christensen and Prout (2002, p.493) examine the link between Articles 12 and 13 and the human rights issue:

*The CRC provides that in all work (including research) children are treated as fellow human beings, giving their views autonomous status and including consideration of their rights. It is no longer sufficient or legitimate, therefore, to say that children are 'too little or too young' to understand and to have a say in decisions concerning themselves.*

On the other hand, central to the entire premise of the UNCRC in general, and Article 12 specifically, is the concept of listening to children's voices. Interest in this idea has recently emerged, translating to the freedom and care values in child welfare (James, 2007). Manna (2006) states that the purpose of Article 12 is to provide the child with an opportunity to be heard in any circumstance, regardless of whether judicial or administrative, direct or indirect. Mayne *et al.* (2016, p.675) consider that '*in simple terms, Article 12 requires that research involving children should be conducted appropriately, and respect must be given to the child's developing capacity to be involved in decisions about participation*'. Thus, Article 12 is very important, as Lansdown (2011) claims, as it gives the CRC high value against which the achievements of the other articles can be measured. Roose and Bouverne-De Bie (2007) argue that, although Article 12 is key, the protection articles (16 in all: 4, 11, 19–22, 32–41, as the UNICEF website identifies) are more important. Further, Mayne *et al.* (2016) see that including children in research depends on four articles from the UNCRC, Article 2: it is for all children; Article 3: find the best for children; Article 12: respect children's perspectives; and Article 13: allow them to express themselves. What is more, James and James (2008) speculate that listening to children's views and opinions does not mean these will be taken into account by adults; nonetheless, the majority of governments have formed different ways of hearing the child's voice directly (Wall & Dar, 2011). Reddy and Ranta (2002) emphasise that children's participation is similar to adult participation types; either to embody themselves or to be represented by their organisations. Geldenhuys and Doubell (2011) on the other hand state that, although there are still major obstacles to the promotion of children's voices, there continue to be

many attempts to develop their participation. Reddy and Ranta (2002, p.5), however, reached the following conclusion from their study: *Unfortunately, though children's right to participation is a much discussed and heavily debated issue, very few have actually been able to translate this into action and make it a ground reality.* Thus, children's rights to participation and their opportunities to express themselves in reality, until now, are rare.

### **3.B.4 Children's right to a voice**

It is preferable to pay attention to the children's voice concept when writing about participation rights. The children's voice concept, as identified by James and James (2008, p.28) '*... calls for children's voices to be heard [and] refers to the process of allowing children to articulate their views on matters that concern them*'. Until the late 1970s, the voices of children were unheard in many situations, including academic research; however, there are many ways for children to express themselves, such as through art activities, including drawing, for example (James & James, 2008). Also, Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2016) found that, to date, there has been a debate among professionals in higher education over the struggles that the students' voice issue faces. What is more, the professional knowledge about this issue remains limited. Thus, listening to children's voices is a challenging process, and adults do not give sufficient attention to children's views. Some researchers face the challenge and begin to learn how to have children participate in their research so as to hear their voices (Roberts, 2008). In this respect, Rudduck and Fielding (2006, p.221) found that the '*... student voice is not a new topic for Educational Review, which had devoted a whole issue to it in 1978*'. Mukherji and Albon (2011) mention that the interest in hearing children's voices has been apparent since 1980; however, nowadays, the 'children's voice' expression is considered a logical enquiry in children's lives, with each government providing different types of support on this issue and achieving this idea (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006).

It is well known that central to the entire premise of the UNCRC is the concept of listening to children's voices. Interest in this idea has emerged, more so recently, and translates to the freedom and care values in child welfare (James, 2007). The UNCRC established two Articles (12 and 13) for different issues, safeties and provisions, and does not forget to provide children with their right to express their views on any topic

and accordingly share their knowledge with others (The Welsh Government's UNCRC Website, 2011). Wyness (2006, p.210) states that: '*... if we examine the UNCRC in more detail a "top-down" approach is evident in the conditional nature of children's participation*'. This is considered as evidence relating to the importance of Article 12 from the UNCRC. Nevertheless, allowing children to express their opinions is not only limited to the UNCRC article claim for the need to listen to children's voices; having children participate in research is also considered another opportunity for them to express themselves and empower their position in society (Edwards & Alldred, 1999).

The participation process is founded on two key principles: allowing children to express themselves by voicing their opinions, whilst the adult's role is to support them and frame the idea for easy implementation (Ghirotto & Mazzoni, 2013). Still, there remain some concerns pertaining to children's right to a voice; people understand the idea as children saying or asking to do something and adults having to agree with them. In actuality, the case is different and more in-depth; it is respecting the relationship between children and adults, attempting to understand each other's perspectives and to fulfil children's needs to lead a happy life (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2014-2015). Moreover, as can be seen through Rudduck and Fielding's (2006) perspective, allowing children's voices to be heard is a more superior concept than allowing them to simply say what they want because finding their voice is relative to their identity. What is more, Flutter (2006) recognises, as a result of her project on the school environment, that students' voices are of interest for professionals, as well as for the educational researcher. Heard children's voices are considered to '*... test the effectiveness of interventions from part of the children's rights agenda*' (Roberts, 2008, p. 272). However, although there is improvement in the research numbers of participating children, this participation is considered a transaction—not transformation. For sure, this will be based on the context of any country, according to their conditions, so as to allow children's voices to be heard (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2016)

In general, James (2007) discusses how the importance of children's voices in research in childhood studies is widely recognised and has become a powerful input in social science research. Listening to children's voices can be achieved in many ways, including having them participate in the research. Despite this, there remain major obstacles for children, specifically in promoting their voices; however, researchers continually attempt to develop their participation to hear their voices (Geldenhuys &

Doubell, 2011). On the other hand, Poyntz *et al.* (2016) found that until now, children and childhood studies have been considered rare, although they can be covered from different aspects, such as sociology, anthropology, education and media, or sometimes two different aspects, which can be drawn together to form a research about children. This sharing could motivate researchers to explore new knowledge about children from another aspect.

### ***3.B.5 Review of critiques about the UNCRC***

In this section, I will present different perspectives relating to the UNCRC, critiqued from a number of aspects relating to this study, such as children's participation rights in the CRC, how the westernised concept has been imposed upon other cultures, and their limited attention to these same issues.

The main aim of the UNCRC is centred on how an image of children, as members of a family and community, has been put forward, and suggests that rights and suitable responsibilities, consistent with their age and stage of growth, are provided. The UNCRC, as a notion, focuses on some concepts more so than others, with Lundy (2007, p. 928) mentioning six main areas of children's rights to which limited attention is afforded, including 'family life and alternative care, education, play and leisure, health, welfare and material deprivation, and criminal justice and policing'. The UNCRC supports the idea that a basic quality of life should be a fundamental right for all children (UNICEF website). In this vein, Freeman and Veerman (1992) explain that the aim of the Convention is centred on planning for children's needs universally, and the ways in which this could differ between countries because each has different values, cultures, capacities and economies. Thus, it is clear that the aim of the UNCRC is concerned with protecting children in different ways, with Jans (2004) mentioning that the aim of children's rights is focused on building a social position for children; therefore, according to this aim, from the West to the East, focus has been placed on protection rights more so than others. Whilst Al-Otaibi (2008) considers that the main aim of the UNCRC is justice and equality for all children, without any type of discrimination or distinction, gender is one issue that has been stressed by the UNCRC, within their foundation of articles on these rights. Moreover, Lansdown (2011) claims that the present participation right, translated in Article 12 from the UNCRC, assures that the UNCRC applies the equality concept amongst all children. Accordingly, if we

focus on justice as a concept, the participation right is considered a ‘liberty right’, as Kanyal (2014) describes it, as it gives children their right to vote and make decisions.

Participation attempts by adults in allowing children to implement this has become very important nowadays, as it increases the creation of new solutions for children’s issues (Jans, 2004). Furthermore, participation rights can make an effective contribution in terms of ideas, by children, of societal culture (Lundy, 2007). On the other hand, Lansdown (2011) claims that governments have to encourage children to participate nationally and internationally, as the role of participation is considered to be the core of their responsibility. Also, a government's role is to support such types of contribution and incorporate it within a legal framework.

Raman (2000) states that whilst highlighting the individuation of children’s rights, which is widespread in the context of children’s rights literature, it is not being suggested that the individual rights of a child do not deserve focus, or that they should be rejected. However, Raman (2000) suggests that the UNCRC is adopting a critical role in the development of a global ethics, and expresses some concern about the similarities between this and earlier colonial interventions across society and law. In fact Raman (2000) believes that in terms of society, or in the collective, children's rights should be emphasised with consideration of the historical context of European capitalism. The entire field of child’s rights cannot be differentiated from the overall developments being made in international law. Furthermore, he suggests that the relationship between the individual and society be redefined.

Accordingly, children should be assisted in open expression of their thoughts and views, thus allowing the concept of ‘knowledge is power’ to become a reality for such individuals. A point raised by Landy and McEvoy (2012) is that, although there is a clear right to open expression, to be enjoyed by all people, the UNCRC encompasses a number of articles centred on ensuring the suitable application of this particular right, specifically for children. Importantly, children being afforded a rights-based approach indicates that adults are positioned to facilitate the empowerment of children, such as through the provision of research process-related guidance, information and support. These subsequent informed positions provide a wealth of insight into the topic under examination, which then can provide further contributions in terms of garnering further

widespread understanding of children’s rights—which, essentially, is the underpinning of rights-based research.

### **3.C Participation right**

This part of the literature review identifies the definition of the participation concept from different aspects and the importance of participation rights, and provides an overview of children’s participation around the world and in the Middle East (Implementing Articles 12 and 13 of the UNCRC). It further considers the power in the participation process, and demonstrates different perspectives from participating members (the researcher, children and parents) towards children’s participation in research.

More attention has been directed to adults’ participation in research, whilst limited attention has been afforded to children’s participation, as a result of the belief that children lack the ability to contribute effectively (James & James, 2008). As mentioned above, in 1989 the UNCRC set out their aim to achieve three key rights for children: provision, protection and participation. The participation right allows children to express themselves as social actors in their society, to have their voices heard by expressing their views towards any issue, and to be involved in activities and make decisions (Fielding & Bragg, 2003). Meehan (2016) mentions that the plan for the UNCRC for the next 25 years will be to keep pursuing children’s rights issues and encouraging all countries that have signed with them to increase research activities concerning children’s matters by involving them and giving them the chance to make decisions about their lives. These assumptions will achieve the UNCRC intentions and aims.

#### ***3.C.1 Participation definition***

Nowadays, children have become ‘... *a highly visible social minority group*’ (Wyness, 2006, p. 209), and are subject to attitudes that consider the participation right as ‘... *effectively subordinate to a Western imperative to protect and provide for the world’s children*’ (Wyness, 2006, p. 210); in other words, children’s rights are based on a Western view that is applied to all children on a worldwide scale. Ghirotto and Mazzoni (2013, p.306) suggest that: ‘... *participation means to support children’s agency in a way that allows children to realise their ideas*’. Chawla (2001, p.1) defines participation



as the ‘... *process in which children and youth engage with other people around issues that concern their individual and collective life conditions*’. Both these definitions consider children at the centre of the process of participation, rather than as the receiver of protection and provision. As Green (2012, p.16) mentions, real participation is ‘*achieving inclusivity through being involved, irrespective of the level of engagement*’. Furthermore, Chawla (2001, p. 3) proposes seven forms of participation: ‘*prescribed participation, assigned participation, invited participation, negotiated participation, self-initiated negotiated participation, graduated participation and collaborative participation*’. Children participating in any activities to express themselves should be recognised as they:

... *take part in and to contribute actively to a situation, an event, a process or an outcome, although the extent of the contribution and the autonomy with which it is made may vary considerably and may be constrained in various ways* (James & James, 2008, p. 92).

It is, however, not necessary for participation to be in research or any high academic procedure; rather it should be centred on giving children the opportunity to express their views about any issue (Roberts, 2008). Furthermore, there is a different definition from researchers between *involving* children in research and children *participating* in research. Shaw *et al.* (2011) illustrate that children participating in research will be sources of research data, whilst involving them in research means using one of three models: being advisers, cooperating, or retaining ownership of the research. Also, Jensen (2016, p.1) sees that ‘*Researchers often use children as informers or deliverers of data...*’.

Recently, in research language, keywords have changed, as has practice. In the past, practitioners conducted ‘research on’ children, then ‘research with’ children; now, they also include ‘research by’ children (Brownlie *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, Flutter (2006) states that including children in research as data sources allows them to actively participate in any change that will happen in the project process. Davis (2007) mentions that highlighting and emphasising children’s perspectives is considered a large gulf in adults’ concepts about children’s positions, from the inert role to an effective one. Furthermore, Fielding and Bragg (2003) confirm that involving children in research, as a new research model, is increasing in the UK and worldwide.

### 3.C.2 *The importance of participation rights*

The debates, from different aspects, setting out the idea of children's participation have been supported by the UNCRC (Ghirotto & Mazzoni, 2013). Increasing awareness by governments, pertaining to children's rights issues, has encouraged the establishment of committees to support children's rights and accordingly implement the various articles. In this respect, March 2005 was a significant date as the first Children's Commissioner for England was appointed (Roberts, 2008). The role of the Office of the Children's Commissioner is centred on promoting and protecting children's rights in England with the aim of '... *listening to what children and young people say about things that affect them and encouraging adults making decisions to take their views and interests into account*' (p.1). In the specific context of the KSA, the National Commission for Childhood was established to provide a comprehensive, supportive and stimulating umbrella of initiatives for the development and protection of the Saudi child (National Commission for Childhood, 2014).

Nowadays, on the one hand, researchers focus on how ethical guidelines can be provided in mind of protecting children and accordingly providing them with the right to express their voice. On the other hand, more attention to children's views concerning their participation process in any research (Edwards & Alldred, 1999) is needed. What is more, children's participation decisions should be considered an important issue for researchers, as indicated by the provisions of the UNCRC (Chawla, 2001), and Määttä and Aaltonen (2016, p.167) mention '*The aim of implementing the participation rights of young people in various arenas and activities of society is commonly agreed*'.

Despite it not being easy to select children as researchers in studies, the desire to involve them in research is increasing in the modern-day academic domain. The concern of listening to children's voices is emerging (Harker, 2002). However, the view of researchers, when including children in research, remains traditional as they frame children as incomplete copies of adults (Danby & Farrell, 2004). On the other hand, though, there is a liberal view founded by MacNaughton *et al.* (2007) that suggests there are three roles that support the idea of hearing children's views and giving them the chance to make decisions in public. Researchers who have children participating in their research adopt three roles in the participation process namely, translator, intermediary and advocate. Early childhood experts should know about each of these

roles when including children in research. MacNaughton *et al.* (2007) conclude that early-childhood professionals face challenges because of their support for the children's rights issue from traditional early-childhood experts. Also, Jensen (2016) mentions that, until now, the UNCRC has faced non-acceptance from some professionals as they see these rights as being difficult for any society to implement.

### ***3.C.3 Overview of children's participation worldwide (implementing Articles 12 and 13 of the UNCRC)***

This section summarises what has been written about the achievements of the communities of the UNCRC and children's rights overseas. Reddy and Ranta (2002) argue that researchers have not translated any children's involvement in any project or event as 'participation', as this depends on the child's culture and individual situation. Thus, children's participation in any project depends on the culture formed from their experience and surrounding factors, such as the media and their experiences (Reddy & Ranta, 2002).

A special edition of the State of the World's Children Report, to celebrate 20 years of the CRC, was issued in many countries, and the CRC gave children the opportunity to talk directly to Members of Parliament (MPs) (UNICEF, 2009). Also, to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the CRC,

*... on 24 September 2014 the Committee held online discussions with children (defined as in the Convention on the Rights of the Child as persons under the age of 18) from 14 different countries using Google+ Hangout. The countries that took part: Australia, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Gambia, Japan, Lebanon, Nepal, Peru, Philippines, Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay and Yemen (United Nations Human Rights, 2014).*

Moreover, UNICEF (2010) discussed how the world has been influenced by the CRC, with a number of research studies supporting the view that the CRC has had an impact. Each region of the world provides various examples of the CRC's impact on law and practice. The following section provides an illustrative list of impacts in different regions of the world, drawing on independent research studies and government reports.

Taking each region by continent, I start with Africa. In 1990 (UNICEF, 2010), Burkina Faso, which is located in the west of Africa, ratified the CRC and created the Children's Parliament to review proposed legislation in response to the principle of participation provided in the CRC. Moccia *et al.* (2009) shows that in South Africa, parliament and

the government are concerned with children's rights through their participation in children's policy events: for example, in 1992, children were given the opportunity to defend their rights through their own participation in organising the Molo Songololo Summit. Further, in 2005, children and young people were afforded an effective role in framing the rules of children's rights in South Africa. In addition, Geldenhuys and Doubell (2011) completed a study in the country, concerned with children's voices relating to school discipline, with the aim to give children a chance to express their perspectives of school systems in regard to the issue of discipline. The researchers found that children's participation rights still needed improvement in South Africa, whereas in South Sudan, children had a successful experience when they met the parliamentarians who authorised the UNCRC and other organisations interested in children's right issues. Street children were allowed to talk to the media and to some administrators in government, about what they face as problems (Save the Children, 2014).

Lansdown (2011) refers to two successful experiences of children attending parliament to have their voices heard directly. The first took place in Nigeria, with children's increasing participation in parliament, with the children making a presentation to show the situation of Nigerian children; Lansdown's second case was Serbia, as mentioned in the European paragraphs later on. Discussing the case of children's participation in parliament. Wall and Dar (2011) argue whether or not children should have their own parliament, or whether it is appropriate for them to share the adult parliament in expressing their viewpoints. Wall and Dar (2011) came to the conclusion that it is not necessary to have a separate parliament for children because it is considered a token process for children.

Moving to Asia, in Mongolia located in east-central Asia, the achievement of the CRC was presented to UNICEF (2009). Mongolia opened a centre for child rights in order to facilitate and enlighten MPs about children's rights issues. The concerned parliamentary group was also active in child development and protection with the objective to create child-friendly legal reforms. In the same way, Mongolia's government supports children in expressing their views by giving them the opportunity to organise exhibitions and conferences and participate in policy debate on television. Another achievement about children's participation was in Nepal; children who joined children's clubs reported to the UNCRC about the situation faced by themselves (Save the Children, 2014). In

Istanbul (Turkey) in 1996, the Child-friendly Cities Initiative emerged with the aim to involve and support local governments in promoting children's rights and raising awareness of their rights. One of the goals of this initiative was to raise the awareness of adults and children concerning a child's rights, where children's awareness and appreciation of their rights plays a role in tying them to moral and philosophical values related to their actual daily lives and surroundings. What is more, this initiative was established so as to include children as members to have their voices heard concerning their needs and the problems they are facing, as well as to secure their participation in setting and modifying the rules and policies related to them (as children) (Monti, 2008).

Moving to the case in Europe, in 2003 in Denmark few children had their voices listened to in the case of divorce issues, while in Sweden on the other hand, between 1999 and 2001, an estimated 50% of children were given the chance to have their decisions heard (Lansdown, 2011). In Finland, the government recommended that the opinions of children younger than 12 years old, relating to parental custody, should be heard if the child is considered mature enough (Arab Council on Childhood and Development, 2011).

In Norway, the Tracking Children project introduced between Norsk Form and the Norwegian Children's Complaints Office was implemented. The aim of the project was centred on listening to children's opinions in relation to city planning: for instance, children were asked for their input concerning the planning of crossing pedestrian zones, which is the most dangerous area from their perspective. The key finding from this project was that children's answers were different to those of the adults concerning city planning (Monti, 2008). Furthermore, Lansdown (2011) showed an example of successful experiences of children attending parliament to have their voices heard directly in Serbia, where children met MPs to express their perspectives in parliament.

In Ireland, Gilleece and Cosgrove (2012) identified a weak relationship between children's information about their rights, and their participation. There is an improvement in decision-making processes, but more than 50% of children have never voted or expressed their perspectives. In the United Kingdom (UK), Willow *et al.* (2007, p.15) asked more than 1,300 children the question, *what would you want to do if you could be a minister for one day?* One of their answers was *'listen to young people'*. However, based on the results from their online survey, which was carried out in

2006/07 and which asked children about the extent to which their views are taken into account by a range of different adults, the highest answer was 'always'. Alderson (2008) claims that, in Britain, every child has the right to participate in policy planning and evaluation, whilst James and James (2004) describe how the improvement of children's rights awareness and implementation of these rights is complicated. Lyon (2007) believes that the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) still needs more support concerning the recognition of children's rights as an issue. Finally, moving to South America, Brazil after having ratified the Convention, set new statutes for children and adolescents based on the principles of the CRC.

### ***3.C.4 Overview of children's participation in the Middle East (implementing Articles 12 and 13 of the UNCRC)***

Buelens and Mortier (1989, cited in Roose & Bouverne-De Bie, 2007) argue that the interest regarding children's rights in third-world countries should be given priority over and above any other rights relevant to the country, even if the country is at war. Moreover, the report on the performance of the Arab Council for Childhood and Development (2011) mentioned that the Arab Human Development reports showed a lack of knowledge on the rights of children in Arab countries. This matter represents a significant obstacle to the challenges of the twenty-first century in all fields. In this respect, the strategic objectives of the Arab Council for Childhood and Development included working on providing data, information, specialised knowledge and development regarding the issues of the Arab child's rights. Through the monitoring of the reality of childhood in the Arab world, both in terms of quantity and quality, analysing the potential transformations of this reality, and accordingly encouraging the publication of research and studies in specialised periodicals, the Arab Council for Childhood and Development was able to collaborate with research centres and institutions concerned with this matter.

The UNICEF report (2007) from the National Council of the Family Affairs in Jordan stated that, in Jordan, when analysing children's situations, it was found that levels of communication skills, analysis and self-confidence improved amongst the participating children. In addition, they also recognised the various social issues, rights and responsibilities. Some of them participated in the planning processes of the outstanding frameworks; others worked as peer educators and trainers. Most importantly, children

now are speaking on behalf of themselves and other children. Despite the fact that their numbers remain few, there is a positive trend towards increased coverage. Also, the Arab Council for Childhood and Development (2011) has shown some participation of children in different countries. Amongst these initiatives, the Arabic children's forum was launched between 22 and 24 February 2010, in Egypt. Thirty-four children from nine countries (Tunisia, Comoros, Sudan, Somalia, Palestine, Qatar, Libya, Egypt and Yemen) were invited to represent their respective countries. The aim of this forum was to introduce the children's participation concept and accordingly implement children's rights articles through this idea. In addition, it sought to increase children's participation in Arabic countries because of the main findings of the 2011 study, undertaken by the Arab Council for Childhood and Development about the role of civil society organisations, centred on the lack of children's participation on the one hand, and the strong desire of the children to express themselves on the other. What is more, following the findings of the research, some countries, such as Libya, Qatar and Yemen, have since established a national forum to give children the opportunity to express their perspectives relating to their needs and issues, and to hold regular meetings to discuss their problems (Arab Council for Childhood and Development, 2011).

Along the same lines, in order to support Saudi children in expressing themselves, a Saudi newspaper, Al-Hayat, introduced the Childhood Parliament Experience as part of the child's page in the newspaper. This project was proposed by Al-Swoyid (2005), a writer interested in children's rights issues, who also is considered the founder of the Childhood Parliament. Since the first issue of the 'Young Innovators' page appeared in Al-Riyadh newspaper on 6 January 2005, children have demanded the establishment of a Children's Parliament similar to those adopted by some Arab countries, such as Morocco, Yemen, Lebanon and Jordan. The idea of a Children's Parliament in these countries was established in an effort to examine whether or not it was an effective means of implementing the UNCRC and helping to spread the culture of dialogue and accordingly promote the values of democracy in children's minds. Further, the second report from Saudi Arabia, provided to the National Commission for Childhood in 2005, mentioned various attempts to implement Article 12, for example, children have the freedom to express their opinions in their school and cultural clubs. What is more, the media has a place in the participation process of Saudi children; there are programmes on television and radio for children to share their interest topics. Also, a number of

magazines and newspapers have sections allowing children to write in and express their opinions about different issues and to discuss their requirements.

Accordingly, focusing on Saudi Arabia and children's research, as this study does, Bin Said (2007) and Bashatah (2011) note a lack of studies concerned with Saudi children and childhood, stating that no reports or statistics show the reality of childhood, except the UNICEF and UNCRC reports. Bashatah's (2011) research questioned Saudi children, aged 10–17 years and of both genders, about which rights they wanted to achieve and which warranted more attention. Bashatah's findings show that all the answers related to Article 12 of the UNCRC and, emphasise that the children wanted to have their voices heard and they wanted to be able to express themselves. Furthermore, unfortunately, the NCC does not play a role in increasing these types of studies (Bin Said, 2007; Bashatah, 2011). In addition, the third and fourth reports from Saudi Arabia (2006–2010) state that the government should focus more keenly on Article 12 because the cultural perspectives of children, particularly girls, have been limited; typically, they can express their viewpoints only within their families, schools and via social media (National Commission for Childhood, 2006–2010). What is more, in 2012, the Child Care Association (CCA) was established by the individual efforts of people who are interested in children's issues and who want to support them. This organisation, based in Riyadh City and dependent on members' donations, offers different services for all children from birth through to 18 years of age. Its aim is to offer a suitable environment for children to grow positively and to increase mothers' awareness in dealing with their children. It has provided many different types of programme, one of which is known as 'AFLATON'; one aim of this programme is informing children, aged 6–18 years, about their rights (Child Care Association website, 2013). Also, in the last annual report (2015) for the Child Care Association it was mentioned that it contributes to setting a national plan about childcare, such as through its contributions in terms of preparing the early childhood standards document in the KSA, and providing workshops for mothers about children-rearing and childcare, so as to increase awareness. Moreover, through media, the CCA provides various educational films for all family members about children's needs and how they can address them. What is more, at the last conference held in the KSA about children rights conventions, Qtran (2015) facilitated a presentation entitled: *The situation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Kingdom of Saudi-Arabia? General measures of implementation*. He found that the



KSA is one country that still does not hold a clear image about children's rights conventions from the aspect of law. The statutes of the provisions dealing with human rights, in general, and international treaties, do not enjoy precedence over local laws. Article 26 of the country's law is that *'the state shall protect human rights in accordance with Islamic Sharia.'*

### ***3.C.5 The power in the participation process***

It is worth considering the power relationship between adults and children in the participation process. Although, including children in research empowers them in some aspects of the research, but researchers cannot grant power because of the differences of the research factors (Roberts, 2008). On the one hand, Ghirotto and Mazzoni (2013) comment on the importance of the adult's power if it enables children to improve their ideas and does not stifle their imagination. Also, Moore *et al.* (2016, p.249) found that: *'... adults who divested too much power might be considered unsafe or strange by children'*. Researchers should afford children more power by giving them different options, and appreciate their participation because they bring a valued perspective from their experiences. Danby and Farrell (2004) suggest that it is not an adult's right to refuse a child's participation in research, if the child wants to try this experience. This attitude from adults and their power shows how they can control children's lives. McGlone (2016) comments that children have the right to accept or refuse the researcher's order to participate in the project, despite being at the same school. On the other hand, children's opinions, when they play a part in any project that will present useful information about their views through their feedback, also will allow them to participate in project-planning, such as when children express their opinions about the school environment, as Flutter (2006) mentions. What is more, the conversations among children during the project helps them to solve their problems, increase their self-development (Edwards & Alldred, 1999) and accordingly enhance their competence by encouraging each other (Chawla, 2001). An example of children's power is when Flutter (2006) established many advantages from giving school students the opportunity to express their voices at the project level, such as developing the school culture, improving students' awareness about the school environment, and recognising learning obstacles or assistance from students' responses and helping them to understand the learning environment. The opposite situation is shown by Ghirotto and Mazzoni (2013), when having children participate in garden planning project; adults ignored children's

opinions and implemented their own planning - that is considered a way of overriding children's rights issues.

### ***3.C.6 Different perspectives towards children's participation in research***

This part highlights different perspectives from different people. Some are reflected as key participants in the participation process, such as the researchers and children, whereas others are considered as minor, such as parents.

#### ***3.C.6(1) Researchers' perspectives***

This study focuses on researchers' attitudes about having children participate in their research. Thus, researchers' perspectives are given the most attention. Researchers' perspectives concerning children's participation in research differ; some are based on method whilst others are based on culture, and some on the relationship between children and researchers. In this respect, Hart (1994) claims that children's participation in any country depends on their culture and the parents' nurturing philosophy. Moreover, Punch (2002) considers that the correct way of having children participate in research is through the use of traditional methods with them, such as observations and interviews, however technique simplification is appropriate for children. Cook and Hess (2007) mention that the inclusion of children in research, as participants, presents the researcher with unexpected findings because children give researchers the opportunity to understand their world - the world of a child. Also, James (2007) claims that using children as participants in the research process will build a good relationship between the researcher and the children, which additionally shows them how the researcher respects their rights and appreciates their support. Also, including young people in research, if they have prepared for it, is considered one of their rights by allowing them to share their information or express their perspectives about an issue. This right is aligned with their position in society (Määttä & Aaltonen, 2016). On the other hand, MacNaughton *et al.* (2007) comment on researchers' understanding of children as social actors within the early childhood frames. They identify two concepts which have emerged from this model: the first is children being able to give a clear explanation about the world and their position in that world and the second is that children know the world in a different way to adults.

Danby and Farrell (2004, p.37) reveal the importance of including children in research:

*Educational research is being governed more and more by legislation, policy and practices developed by adults, but for children. These structural and cultural dimensions of research spaces are therefore presenting new challenges for educational research.*

Along the same lines, if the experts, researchers, politicians or government departments are interested in hearing children's voices on any issue, they should be listening to their views and merging them with adults' views (Roberts, 2008). Fielding and Bragg (2003) comment that the reason for the success of any project with children is the selection of the most appropriate child participants; what is more, researchers have to consider that the participation process will be different when children decide to participate, and so they have to establish the role of the children. Childhood researchers, who seek children who want their voices heard, will need to understand the children's circumstances, attributions and reasons for acceptance to participate in research (Edwards & Alldred, 1999). Punch (2002) states that the reasons for acceptance or refusal by children to participate are influenced by the child's position in society or because of the adult's perspectives towards children's abilities when they participate in research. Määttä and Aaltonen (2016) found that if children do not have the right to refuse a participation offer, this will result in truancy from school, on the one hand. On the other hand, some of them agree to participate in any project just to escape the school schedule. Thus, researchers have to give children time to decide on their participation and to choose the right time so as not to conflict with their study and school schedules. However, some researchers want to understand governmental views about when to include children in policy decisions. MacNaughton *et al.* (2007) worked with various governments in order to investigate this issue, and subsequently reported three findings: their colleagues' opinions that it is worth considering children's opinions about the issue; the incredulity of government staff about children's understanding of issues; and children's possibility to answer the staff's questions correctly. Importantly however, even if the ideas are not true, researchers have not had the time to gain experience in this domain and therefore are not sure of the results (MacNaughton *et al.*, 2007). In general, asking children about their views directly, helps adults to change their stereotypes of children and thus to involve them in the story (Roberts, 2008).

### ***3.C.6(2) Parents' perspectives***

The parents of the child participants have their own perspectives towards the participation of their children in research. Some of them agree and others disagree, even

if their children want to have the experience. Hadley *et al.* (2008) found from their project that the majority of parents welcomed the participation of their children in research; the researchers interviewed the children, but with some conditions, such as the appropriate age of the child, providing a suitable environment for the child, controlling the questions asked of the child, and allowing the parents to involve themselves in the participation process. According to these conditions for including the children in research, one mother of a nine-year-old child with sickle cell disease said:

*I think they need to interview children, starting from [age] 9 on up to see what [their] point of view is. They can tell you more about [their] pain than a parent can. It'd be good if they would get a study to ask these kids [themselves] so they'll learn from a child's point of view.... Kids can tell you things that a parent can't* (Hadley *et al.*, 2008, p. 7).

However, Alderson and Morrow (2011) raise the issue of parents attending children's interviews and respecting the privacy rights of the child. This means it will depend on the child's attitude because some children prefer to be interviewed with their parents—at least at the beginning of the interview, whereas others do not want this.

### **3.C.6(3) Children's perspectives**

We have to consider children's views about performing research with them; they inform the researcher of their decisions regarding their participation as they can be the best informant on their general lives (Edwards & Alldred, 1999). Hadley *et al.* (2008, p.4) found from their research about parents' perspectives on having their children interviewed for research that '*... because children's viewpoints are often different from those of their parents, obtaining viewpoints directly from children is essential*'. Also, it is worthwhile for children to become a part of the research process because '*... no one can tell us better than children themselves about what childhood at any given point feels like*' (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013, p. 77). What is more, Moore *et al.* (2016) found that children participating in research can reveal a different understanding of an issue to adults because no one can understand children better than themselves. Including children in research is not only centred on hearing children's voices but also on giving the researcher a complete image of the situation and thereby raising the level of truth of the study (Kyronlampi-Kylmanen & Maatta, 2011). In addition, Jensen (2016) disagrees with the view that children lack abilities, and mentions that they have the ability to understand more than adults, while Ruiz-Casares and Thompson (2016) see that

children are the best in completing research about their lives and expressing themselves; this helps to understand them more easily. Also, capturing children's experience from different ages, cultures, ability and gender contribute to improving understanding of children. In summary, '*... to create channels for taking children's views seriously, it needs to be able to accommodate distinctive localized attempts to reflect the interests of children and young people*' (Wyness, 2006, p. 217). This will be achieved by ensuring the participation of children alongside ethics implementation throughout the research process (Palaiologou, 2014).

### **3.D Ethics with children when participating in research**

This part of the literature review identifies the ethical issues when involving children in research. It highlights the ethics definition, the importance of ethics, and the ethical principles and ethical challenges in research with children.

Palaiologou (2012, p.1) states that: '*in recent years the field of early childhood studies has become increasingly concerned with applying ethical practices to educational environment...*' Moreover, between the 1960s and 1970s, researchers were strongly blamed for the inclusion of any children with special needs or vulnerable children in research without the presence of ethical practices (Gray, 2012).

Certainly, researchers who include children in their research want to have a real image about children's worlds because they represent themselves and are expressive of their own views (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013). Mayne *et al.* (2016) confirm that completing ethical research with children has increased quickly nowadays. Thus, if we give children the power and voice to enable them to participate in research, this obligates the researcher to choose an appropriate methodology for them, give them their right to be listened to, present ethical guidelines, and provide them with the opportunity to involve themselves in research (Grover, 2004). Christensen and James (2008) however state that, until recently, researchers have been slow to have children involved because of the dilemmas concerning related ethical and methodological issues. What is more, Kirk (2007, p.1251) states that:

*the reason for not conducting research with children in the past centre on two issues: firstly a belief that data obtained from children was unreliable and secondly ethical concerns over their vulnerability to exploitation by researchers.*

Palaiologou (2014) claims that ethics with children, when involving them in research, is not only a concern for the researcher, but rather garnering the different perspectives of children and taking them all into consideration, are the real challenges a researcher faces.

### ***3.D.1 Ethics definition***

Christensen and Prout (2002) mention that, in order to establish the best definition for the term 'ethical', the researcher has to understand the child as a participant and social actor in society. However, the concept of ethics has been defined as '*a moral principle or a code of conduct that actually governs what people do*' (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, pp. 59–60). Moreover, ethics are recognised as a person's beliefs towards any subject, regardless of whether it is right or wrong, and these beliefs have been shaped by the person's childhood (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013). In Muslim countries, *Akhlaq* is the word equivalent to ethics, and is recognised as meaning morality (Siddiqui, 1997); thus, the ethics for research is centred on translating it in Muslim and Arabic countries as the morality of the research. With this noted, the Arabic literature review defines ethics as per Ismail (2009), who suggests respecting others' rights and perspectives, whether they are the views of researchers or participants in research. What is more, Serour (2015, p.122) sees that ethics are different from one society to another, as he considers that:

*Medical ethics are based on moral, religious and philosophical ideals and principles of the society in which they are practised. It is therefore not surprising to find that what is ethical in one society may not be ethical in another society.*

However, Al-frejat (2011) sees that ethics should be applied in any research and across all fields, although it is more important in social sciences as most research in this domain deals with humans. A study in Yemen (Aden City), centred on the awareness level of educational researchers in education and art schools, found a lack of researcher awareness towards ethics with 50.9% agreeing to do research even if it could hurt the participants, and 82.5% agreeing on the researcher's right to choose the research tools without considering the participants' situation (Al-Giesie *et al.*, 2001). Furthermore, Al-Otaibi (2000) states that his reason for publishing about ethics in the field of social science research is owing to the lack of ethics resources available in Arabic compared with English resources. Moreover, he recommends that rules should obligate the

researcher to protect the participants' rights and these should be from both governments and universities (Al-Otaibi, 2000).

### ***3.D.2 The importance of ethics***

Historically, attention to ethics in research arose from medical researchers because of the increase in the involvement of vulnerable people (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013). For example, in the UK the research ethics system started in 1960 but nowadays it is considered as a requirement for both medical and non-medical research (Hunter, 2008). Children are considered vulnerable individuals, but there are other factors that also have an influence on the child's view when participating in research, such as the type of research method implemented, the research subject, the researchers themselves, the analyses of data, and the interpretation of data (Morrow & Richards, 1996; Christensen & Prout, 2002). Mukherji and Albon (2011) mention that ethics is an important and wide consideration, which needs to include more pronounced attention in the area of child participants because of their age and vulnerability. Also, Kirk (2007, p.1254) believes '*ethical issues appear to be greater concern in the child research literature because of the construction of children as vulnerable and incompetent*'. What is more, ethical philosophies are built on four concepts: autonomy, justice, beneficence and non-maleficence (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013), meaning that these concepts have to be included in any ethical form (further details are given below for each concept).

On the one hand, it has been seen that the concept of research ethics is concerned with respecting and protecting participants (Alderson & Morrow, 2011) and on the other hand, researchers also have to be respected and protected. Mayne *et al.* (2016) indicate that the informed consent process is significant for them, as adult researchers, as well as for children. There are many advantages when using ethics forms when involving child participants in research, for example, it organises the researcher's project design as they have to plan and choose the appropriate method for children, which leads them to address the ethical questions (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013). What is more, ethical considerations can adjust the relationship between the researcher and the child in the research (Punch, 2002; Flewitt, 2005).

Internationally, Alderson and Morrow (2011, p.11) claim that there are two ethical questions researchers have to ask themselves when they plan for any study: '*Is it worth doing? And can the investigators explain the research clearly enough so that anyone*

*involved can give informed consent or refusal?’* Regarding these questions, on the one hand, Roberts’ chapter in Christensen and James’ (2008) book mentions that although ethical issues are improving in children’s research, the guidelines for research are not always in agreement. On the other hand, Mukherji and Albon (2011) claim that it is very important for any researcher to take ethical issues into consideration as this is a protective instrument for participants, ensuring they are safeguarded from harm or risk when they decide to participate in a study (O’Reilly *et al.*, 2013). Further to this, each university must have their own ethics guidelines, ethics forms and an ethics committee to supervise the ethics process and give approval to researchers. If the research ethics are correct, approval will happen by group agreement from the committee (Mukherji & Albon, 2011; O’Reilly *et al.*, 2013). However, in developed countries such as the UK for example, Hunter (2008, p.815) states that:

*Most universities and other research institutions in the UK either have or are developing or adapting research governance systems to provide ethical approval for all research using human subjects that is conducted by staff and students of those universities.*

Also, Punch (2011, p.53) points out that: *Universities usually now have specific and detailed ethical clearance requirement for each project. These requirements will normally be based on the legal framework and codes of conduct mentioned.* What is more, in the USA all investigators have to attend a training course - presented by institutional review boards - about ethics to conduct their research (O’Reilly *et al.*, 2013); this step illustrates the importance of ethics.

### **3.D.3 Ethical principles**

It is worth mentioning that:

*researchers should be aware of the visible challenges in research project such as children’s age, rights, emotions, sociocultural context, but equally important they ought to be aware of the invisible signs such as the effect of adult power, control and decision-making as well as social injustice and inequalities that impact on children’s environments and context. The purpose of ethical research with young children is to facilitate these issues by exercising a questioning approach to the nature and causes of the research* (Palaiologou, 2014, p. 701).

All these challenges could be translated to ethical principles. For this study, the four principles mentioned by O’Reilly *et al.* (2013) are implemented; these are respect for autonomy, justice, non-maleficence and beneficence. The main ethical concepts are



implemented in real life, particularly amongst children when they decide to participate in research. Each of these principles is discussed in the following paragraphs.

### ***3.D.3(1) Respect for autonomy***

When applying this principle, researchers have to focus on two aspects, namely informed consent and right to withdraw. Respecting participants' autonomy means respecting their rights when they decide to participate in research as a source of data, and also respecting their parents' rights. In order to ensure the implementation of autonomy, as O'Reilly *et al.* (2013) illustrates, the researcher has to respect children's rights to be given time to make their decisions as to whether or not they would like to participate in the research by signing the consent form, and also to understand their right to withdraw at any time. Moore *et al.* (2016) also see that the researcher has to have a plan for the children who will participate in their research. The plan has to include how to protect them, how to inform them about the nature of the research, and how to express their feelings of discomfort, whilst at the same time giving them opportunities to make decisions if they want to complete their participation or want to withdraw.

In the case of children, there is the argument about consent where on the one hand, in some cases, it has to be signed by the child only if the researcher cannot get the parent's permission; on the other hand, it needs to be signed by the parents and children, even if they are aged 18 and considered mature (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). Therefore, children's parents should be respected by giving them all the information pertaining to the research (Shaw *et al.*, 2011); they then might give the researcher access to their child (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013). Hart (1994) stresses that children's parents' opinions to allow their children to participate in research may differ from parent to parent depending on their nationality and philosophy.

### ***3.D.3(2) Justice***

Justice is set on the equality between the participants and avoiding coercion. The concept of justice is synonymous with the word 'fair'. Researchers have to treat all participants, including children, equally without any discrimination or partiality. Also, they have to share with all children the risks and benefits that may occur when participating in the research. What is more, they should not force children to participate in the research. Justice in research, with children, is related to gender issues in some

countries; for example, in KSA, the findings of the third and fourth UNCRC reports (2006–2010) mention that the government will focus more on the rights set forth in Article 12 (*Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account*), because of the cultural perspectives of children, particularly girls, being limited. Thus, in the KSA, fairness in providing children with the opportunity to express themselves is not shown because of children's gender. As an example, Dunhill (2016) sees that from the findings of children's explanations, children understand the justice concept; they are very confident in terms of explaining the voice term and how people have to have their voice heard. This understanding leads them to understand human rights as a concept and to increase their knowledge so as to respect others' rights. What is more, it is necessary to double check the research title to assure it has not any kind of bias for one group or stereotype (Beauchamp & Haughton, 2012).

### ***3.D.3(3) Non-maleficence***

This means to think about harm and benefits, which will help researchers to avoid risks and create benefits. In order to apply this principle, the researcher has to attend to three concepts: confidentiality, anonymity and debriefing (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013). Mayne *et al.* (2016) identify three main components for any meaningful consent form: 'information', which means the information provided by researchers for children about the research; 'understanding' in terms of how the research explains the research process for children and highlights the aim of their participation; and 'response', where children accept the participation offer. The researcher has to plan well for this principle in the early stages of the research so as to decrease harm and increase the chance of benefits (Punch, 2011). In childhood studies, the inclusion of children in some research, regardless of the method, is considered harmful depending on the topic, and so researchers have had to change the participants to adults (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). Also, the researchers have to know that there are some factors that could influence children's responses when they are asked to take the consent forms and make a decision in terms of whether or not to participate in any project. The factors are their culture, their context and their understanding, which are the options that should be shown to them through the informed consent (Mayne *et al.*, 2016). In order to implement confidentiality for children, the researcher has to respect them by hiding their identities (Best, 2012; Flewitt, 2005; Gray, 2012), such as by assigning a code to each participant, for example.

Sometimes, the researcher can create a way of protecting children's privacy, as Davis (2007) did when using a storytelling method in her study with children by allowing the children to tell their story in the third person, which anonymised their identity.

However, until now, the confidentiality issue for children has been unclear. When they participate in research, they want their photo and names shown in the study because they want to be known in society (Ruiz-Casares & Thompson, 2016). What is more, after collecting the data, the role of the researcher involves presenting a report for the participants, for both children and parents, to give them the opportunity to ask questions. This is a simple way of thanking them for their participation (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013).

#### **3.D.3(4) Beneficence**

This means that when the researcher is conducting research with children, they might face some risks; whatever the level of risk, the researcher has to inform the children and their parents about it. Furthermore, she/he has to explain the wider outcome from this research and be truthful with them and not promise the parents that it will not affect them or their children in any way, because it might happen (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013).

It is important for the researcher to know that all stages of the research have ethical implications (Beauchamp & Houghton, 2012). The role of the researcher in this situation is centred on overcoming any harm in completing the research. For example, one of my friends had disabled children participate in her research, and asked them about their feelings towards their school, which could harm them when they do not like something and experience negative feelings. Thus, she decided, when she constructed the ethics forms, to start her fieldwork by explaining to the children and their parents about this probability and providing for such a situation. At the school, she asked an adviser to be with her in case the children needed any help (informal conversation with a PhD student on 10 April 2014). In addition, when implementing the beneficence, the researcher could give the children an inducement following their participation, particularly if the child will benefit from her/his participation (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013). Also, Jensen (2016) believes that it is the children's right to have it because money has been paid for any project, so why not give the children an inducement. However, this approach might cause problems for the next researcher who comes to perform research with the same children.

Along the same lines, Punch (2011, pp.50-51) divides ethics issues into three stages and each stage has a number of steps. The stages are *before* the research, *during* the research, and *after* the research has been done. The first stage, before the research, is divided into four steps: a- worthiness of the project, which means is the project worth doing?, b- competence boundaries, this applies to the question, am I ready to do research?, c- informed consent, where the researcher has to explain the full project to the participant, and d- benefits, costs, reciprocity which are the steps to think about concerning what will benefit the participants arising from their participation in the project. The second stage is also divided into four steps: a- harm and risk; what kind of harm might face the participant?, b- honesty and trust; how to build a relationship of trust with participants, c- privacy, confidentiality and anonymity; how the researcher organises the project, and d- intervention and advocacy; how the researcher acts when identifying any potential likelihood of harm during the project. The last stage has just three steps: a- research quality; is the study conducted well?, b- ownership of data and conclusion; does any organisation own my project? and c- use and misuse of results; is the research finding appropriate for use?

It should be mentioned that there are three forms that include these principles when involving children in research; according to Green (2012) these are: a- *informed* consent, b- *assent* form with the child's permission to participate, and c- the *dissent* form when children decide to withdraw from the participation process. In addition, the researcher has to be sure to have permission from the children's gatekeepers to have them participate in research. The gatekeepers are the people who are responsible for the child, such as their parents, teachers and social workers (Mukherji & Albon, 2011). However, it is necessary to ensure that these principles are applied with adult participants as they are with children, although there are differences when conducting research with each group (Kirk, 2007). Conforming to these principles is fundamental at all research levels (Flewitt, 2005).

#### ***3.D.4 Ethical challenges in research with children***

Nowadays, researchers have highlighted the need for research ethics when investigating the differences and similarities between children and adults when they participate in research (Morrow, 2008). If we divide the benefits and obstacles for educational researchers, some common items can be identified. Children and adults may face some

difficulties when participation is carried out. For the researchers, there may be struggles in how to deal with children when they participate in research, as they do not have enough knowledge about their participation (Christen & James, 2008). For children, however, the experience of participating in research - if not explained properly (Christen & James, 2008) - could increase their levels of panic and anxiety (Dimond, 2010) because, up to this point, researchers are not adequately prepared in hearing children's voices through their participation in research (Geldenhuys & Doubell, 2011). Unfortunately, researchers have still not established a consent form just for children; they take the adult version and work on it to simplify it to ensure it is appropriate to children's needs, ages and abilities (Mayne *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, Dockett and Perry (2007) question how the researcher can trust what children say when they participate in research. Accordingly, they recommend that researchers need to build good relationships with children by sharing their interests, explaining the research idea and showing them the data after analysis.

For this study, I highlight various dilemmas that are considered to be the most important that children or researchers may face in the completion of child-participant research below:

#### ***3.D.4(1) The power between researchers and children***

Morrow and Richards (1996, p.98) insist that '*the biggest ethical challenge for researchers working with children ...Is the disparities in power and status between adults and children*'. Also, Cook and Hess (2007) mention that the inclusion of children in research, as participants, presents the researcher with unexpected findings; children give the researcher the opportunity to understand their world, whilst the adult's power might be misaligned in research because he/she cannot decide when, where or what children have to do in the research (Mukherji & Albon, 2011). Additionally, the method that researchers use, such as interviewing, transfers the resource power from the adults to the children (Davis, 2007). For example, Cook and Hess (2007) identify that children participating in research may create new themes that the researcher has not planned for; this illustrates their power in research. In this situation, children will be the controllers; the researcher gives them the power to express themselves and listens to their voice (Grover, 2004). At the same level, Flewitt (2005) reports that, when she involves children in her research, she uses recording equipment and explains the research plan to

them, such as how she will use it, the length of the session, how they will participate, among other factors, and further informs them on their rights to withdraw at any time. This process, as mentioned, empowers the children and allows them to feel they are part of the research, not only an object of the research.

### ***3.D.4(2) Choosing the method when children participate in research***

Choosing an appropriate method with children, when having them participate in research, is considered central to the research (Punch, 2002). Gunson *et al.* (2016) see that one of the roles of the researcher is to include children in their project so as to improve applicable research methods to be appropriate to their needs and abilities. Also, Christensen (2004) illustrates the key aspects of involving children in research; she mentions that one of them is increasing the body of literature about the methodology. Christensen and James (2008) claim that the lack of childhood studies reduces the importance of the methodology in any research. Palaiologou (2014) states that although researchers face a problem when involving children in their research, such as finding themselves in a dilemma between choosing a method appropriate to the children's needs or choosing a method that reflects the nature of research. Beauchamp and Haughton (2012) see that it is essential for researchers to choose the best methodology, bearing in mind that the research question needs to be answered, rather than thinking of the easiest way. Alaca *et al.* (2016) found that using a new method with children, such as photos, in order to collect the data, is considered a way of allowing children to express their feelings about society and allows their voices to be listened to, which will help to apply Articles 12 and 13 from the UNCRC. This is one of the key aims of this research.

The methodological issue, when children participate in research, illustrates the child's position in society as a social actor (Morrow & Richards, 1996). The position of the child in society will affect the researcher's choice of the method used with children, when they participate in research (Punch, 2002). What is more, O'Reilly *et al.* (2013) and Christensen and James (2008) stress that any researcher thinking of having children participate in their research has to plan and choose the most appropriate method, which will lead the researcher to address various ethical questions. What is more, Punch (2002) illustrates that although children's participation in research makes the power relationship between children and adults unequal, ethics can adjust this relationship by illustrating the methodological issues. Furthermore, any method that the researcher

adopts with children will identify specific ethical issues (Mukherji & Albon, 2011). One such example is provided by Davis (2007), as mentioned above, when new ethical approaches are adopted in order to respect the children, through hiding their identities. What is more, O'Reilly *et al.* (2013) mention that, in order to implement the four basic ethical codes, researchers need to plan for methods that fit with the children's needs. At the same level, Punch (2002) claims that the culture of society has to be one factor that researchers take into consideration when choosing the method of the research. In addition, as Morrow and Richards (1996, p.97) state:

*the challenge for social research is to find ways of eliciting children's opinions and experiences, and to develop appropriate methods and corresponding strategies to deal with ethical dilemmas that may arise.*

Researchers have to recognise that dealing with children will be different, because as Morrow and Richards (1996) identify in their article, children have different personal features when compared with adults, such as shyness, and also we must not ignore their age and gender. Also, the research has to be carried out in an appropriate environment for both the researcher and the participants. In addition, it is important for the researcher to decide how data will be collected from the children through consideration of the tools to be used and how these will be applied. Thus, the main step to involving children in research is to make a plan before the research is initiated. What is more, the researcher's personality, background, age and gender will affect the research. Lastly, the researcher has to establish that the research questions will be different if the participants are children. For children, it would be unethical to ask some questions about their family income for example, however with adults, on the other hand, it could be acceptable to ask them such questions (Morrow & Richards, 1996).

In summary, using ethics with children when involving them in research remains a concern. Furthermore, different methods and ideas should be applied in order to make the best decision (Palaiologou, 2014).

### **3.E Exploring the research aspects to identify the gap**

From all the literature review sections above, I have found that exploring educational researchers' perspectives about involving children in research using ethics has not used Q-methodology as a method, for capturing data. Focus has been directed towards the participation process, ethics considerations and children's right issues, such as allowing

children to express their voice. Investigation has also centred on the perspective of adults, when using ethics with them and not with children. The literature has also highlighted different gaps in the current body of research around the world, including the Middle East and the KSA, which is the context of the current study.

The literature review shows that, until now, there has been a lack of studies focusing on children and children's right issues. In the KSA specifically, researchers depend on the UNCRC and UNICEF reports and statistics, which show the country's achievements; however, these reports do not focus on children's or adults' perspectives. In the English language, participation and involvement mean two different things; however in the Arabic academic language they translate to the same meaning. As a result, for this meaning in the KSA, children are used only to collect data about them, and therefore the term 'participation' reflects the context in which the proposed research will be conducted. Importantly, it has been known that there is also a lack of the perspectives of educational researchers towards the ethics concept and towards children's participation in research. Also, Q-methodology is considered a new method in the KSA so it will be identified for the academic community. This has been mentioned in the Saudi context chapter in detail in section 2.F: *Research Productivity in the KSA's Universities* p.26.

At the same level, there is a lack of literature in the Arabic language concerning ethics in research as mentioned above by (Al-Otaibi, 2000) (section 3.d.1 *Ethics Definition* p.54). Thus, this research introduces this concept for some and increases awareness for others. Moreover, we do not know much about educational researchers' perspectives about the practice of children participating in research in the KSA, nor do we know about ethics as a concept; we do not know if they agree or disagree with this concept and we do not know about their awareness level of children's rights. Moreover, we are unaware of policymakers' perspectives on the participation of children in research and whether or not they agree with creating ethics guideline. Another query centres on whether they agree on the use of ethics forms, as with adults. If they agree, the concern arises regarding children as participants. Thus, we do not have enough knowledge about Saudi educational researchers' and policymakers' perspectives towards ethics when involving children in research.



### **3.F Research to fill the gap**

Researchers have to be more open-minded and try new methods in research, such as Q-methodology. Moreover, there is a need to work hard to increase studies interested in children's rights issues, as most countries now have signed the UNCRC and requested a five-year report. Essentially, the focus of the researcher, in this case, is on children, participation, and ethics issues owing to the lack of such considerations in research internationally, and in the KSA in particular. Essentially, it is considered almost non-existent. This decision has been based on a range of reasons:

- 1- Whilst studying for my MA, I became aware of the considerable ethical issues arising when recruiting child participants in my dissertation research, and I then wondered why we do not have the necessary obligations, ethics and guidelines in the KSA.
- 2- One of the findings stemming from my MA dissertation concerned that of Saudi children's perspectives on which rights they want to achieve and how their answers related to Article 12 of the UNCRC. I recognised their desire to have their voices heard and to be able to express themselves.
- 3- The findings of the first pilot study, when using the interview and questionnaire as methods for collecting participants' opinion on my topic, showed that participants were less likely to want to be interviewed face-to-face; they chose to participate via email, meaning their answers were limited, this directed me to consider new methods. The standard methods used at KSU are observation checklist, interview and questionnaire. I was aware that, as a researcher who had studied research methods for my MA in the UK, there has been considerable development in methodology to do with research with children. Given an obvious practice gap at KSU, I made the decision to pursue my interest in this area for my PhD.
- 4- Investigating policymakers' perspectives towards these issues, and the various views on participant children in research, ethics guidelines, and educational researchers' perspectives.

Thus, this research aims to answer the following questions:

*RQ1: What are the perspectives of educational researchers and policymakers towards the ethics of children's participation in research?*

*RQ2: What lessons emerge about the ethics of children's participation in research for the educational researchers, policymakers, children and children's parents?*

### **3.G Summary**

This chapter has covered the main areas for this study, children's rights, participation rights and ethics. It has explicated the argument from different perspectives, culture and aspects, and different contexts also. The next chapter provides a full explanation of the methodology that has been used for this study.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE METHODOLOGY

#### 4.A Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the approach adopted to answer the research questions. For this study, data were collected from the participants through the use of two methods; the main one being Q-methodology, whilst the second was interview. The aim of the use of these methods was to identify the perspectives of educational researchers and policymakers. Q-methodology was used to determine the viewpoints of educational researchers. Throughout this thesis I will describe the Q-methodology as a new method because it is new in KSA and also it's uncommon in UK because I have participated in different conferences and always I have been asked what does mean the Q-methodology? Do you mean qualitative or quantitative method?. Although Q-methodology has existed in psychology for more than eighty years, until now this is a new methodology for KSA and also little used in educational Research. It is in this sense that I use the term “new” throughout this thesis, so to emphasis the significance of working with a methodology that the educational researchers were not familiar with. Interviews were conducted with policymakers to investigate their perspectives and discuss the findings of the Q-sort in order to achieve a better understanding of the policy context.

This chapter considers the following:

- Study design
- The researcher's position
- Q-methodology—what is it, and why this has been selected?
- The process involved in the implementation of Q-methodology
- The data analysis process of Q-methodology
- The interview process
- Ethical considerations and trustworthiness
- Strengths and limitations
- Summary

The KSU and the PNU - the universities selected for data collection - have the same schools under the education department, but one school has the same functions but with

different names: at KSU, it is titled Education Policies and Kindergarten, whilst at PNU, Early Childhood. Throughout the course of this thesis, the title early childhood schools is used to refer to both universities' schools so as not to confuse the reader.

#### **4.B Study design overview**

Hammond and Wellington (2013) consider that there is a difference between 'methodology' and 'method': *methodology* is used to show the justification behind using research methods, and thus presents the framework; *method*, on the other hand, presents the means of gathering the research data, such as through interview or questionnaire, and the analysis process. The Oxford English Dictionary (2012, p. 454) defines method as '*a way of doing something*' and methodology as '*a system of methods used in a particular field*'. Moreover, Punch (2011) indicates that method centres on the types of assumptions, where an assumption is implicit in reality and focused on gaining information. Using multiple methods in social science research is considered a type of triangulation (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, Mukherji and Albon (2011) mention that using more than one method increases the overall validity inherent in any study as it will investigate all research aspects from different perspectives. Q-methodology was considered an appropriate methodology for answering the research questions detailed in this thesis and accordingly achieving the aim. Further, Q-methodology was selected as the main method in holistically capturing educational researchers' perspectives and examining the various differences and similarities (Hayne, 1998). The interview method was used with policymakers who are the decision-makers and who therefore are well positioned to influence the policy and practice of educational research and accordingly develop children's rights implementation. The purpose of the interview was to record different perspectives relating to the topic and suitably gauge reactions to the research findings identified by the Q-analysis.

**4.B.(1): The sequence and mode of all data gathering activities and the links to each research question**

**Table 1: Data gathering and research questions**

<b>Data</b>	<b>Activity/ process</b>	<b>Research questions</b>
First pilot study (April-2013)	1-questionnaire with educational researchers. 2-Interviews with preschools head teacher/ postgraduate students/ stockholder in Ministry Of Education. The participants chose not to be interviewed face to face and so instead I used email. Their answers were limited.	This led me to look for alternative research methods and also focus on the research questions. I then considered using Q-methodology.
Second Pilot Phase 1: Developed Q-set May-October 2013	1-Used some responses from my pilot first study for some of my statements. 2- Create the theoretical framework. 3- Created first Q-set	-Led me to focus on children's' right to participate in research from the ethics aspect. - Decided the main themes for the Q-set would be: children's rights and Ethical policy.
Second pilot study Phase 2 October 2013	1-Demonstrated the value of Q-methodology as method for this study. 2- Gave me rich information about the educational researchers' perspectives towards children's participation in research. 3- Learned how to implement Q-methodology in KSA.	- Refined the research questions: 1- What are the perspectives of the educational researchers towards the ethics of children's participation in research? 2- How can these perspectives be understood in the context of Saudi Arabia and children's right defined in UNCRC?
My Panel June 2014	1- Reviewed the Q- set. 2- Decide to write a third question about the policymakers.	Add the third research question: 3-What lessons emerge about the ethics of children's participation in

		research for policymakers and practice?
Pilot study 3 July 2014	1- Focused the validity and reliability for the Q-set 2- Checked the translation of the Q-set from the English to Arabic language.	1- What are the perspectives of the educational researchers towards the ethics of children's participation in research? 2- How can these perspectives be understood in the context of Saudi Arabia and children's right defined in UNCRC? 3-What lessons emerge about the ethics of children's participation in research for policymakers and practice?
Main Study: The fieldwork from: February- May (2015)	1-Collecting the data (Q-methodology with the Educational researchers and interview with the policymakers)	1- What are the perspectives of the educational researchers towards the ethics of children's participation in research? 2- How can these perspectives be understood in the context of Saudi Arabia and children's right defined in UNCRC? 3-What lessons emerge about the ethics of children's participation in research for policymakers and practice?

Analysis and finding	Conducted the analysis for : 1- Q-methodology by PQMethod Software 2- the interviews by using thematic analysis.	Decided to have just 2 final research questions: 1-What are the perspectives of the educational researchers and policy makers towards the ethics of children’s participation in research? <b>Identify the similar and different perspectives of both groups.</b>  2- What lessons emerge about the ethics of children’s participation in research for the educational researchers, policymakers, children and children’s parents? <b>Identify the implications for the each group.</b>
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#### 4.C My position

The researcher’s own motivation in conducting this research stems from multiple positions: personal motivation, background as a professional at KSU and background as an educational researcher who has obtained an MA in International Childhood Studies (University of Sheffield).

From a personal perspective, I sought to face the challenge associated with using Q-methodology, which is unfamiliar to most Saudi researchers, and to determine the extent to which its application would be acceptable in the Saudi research community.

Moreover, growing up in an educated family environment has ensured the motivation to complete a PhD study. Further, I am an employee at KSU as an educational researcher since 2003, I was placed on initial teacher training (Bachelor) programmes for the early years for BA students. I worked alongside final-year undergraduate students in the early childhood field, which required that they be taught how to deal with children and understand their needs, and to solve any problems they may potentially face as future teachers. At this time, fieldwork (early childhood school) was carried out, and it came to

light that many children did not have an opportunity to express their opinions regarding their participation in research, i.e. whether or not they wanted to participate, with permission granted by their parents. In these cases, the schools simply sent a letter to their parents to ask for consent for their child's participation. At this time, prior to completing an MA, I thought it was professional for a school to secure permission from the child's parents as children's rights and related ethics forms were, at that time, an unexplored area; however, the picture became clearer upon studying for my MA at the University of Sheffield, with a module (Qualitative Research with Children and Young People) undertaken pertaining to how research with children should be conducted. The ethics form process was my first experience with such a form.

As an educational researcher, whilst studying for an MA, I included children as participants in my dissertation research, which increased awareness surrounding the various ethical issues with which as a researcher, thus far, I had been unfamiliar with. Moreover, my MA dissertation findings emphasised that, when asking Saudi children (aged 10–17 years) about their understanding of children's rights, all their answers related to Article 12 of the UNCRC; they wanted their voices to be heard (Bashatah, 2011). Consequently, the decision was made to pursue this interest and further deepen understanding of and gain insights into researchers' perspectives towards the ethics of research with children, and their attitude towards children's right to a voice. In this respect, answers to the following questions were sought: *What are Saudi educational researchers' understandings and practices in relation to children's participation in research? What are their perspectives towards the concept of children having a right to a voice? For those who have studied in the KSA/abroad, how appropriate have they found the ethical guidelines to which they have been exposed in the Saudi context?*

It is worth mentioning here that, when collecting data from colleagues—notably educational researchers from the early childhood school at KSU—they considered me as an 'insider researcher', whereas the opposite was believed from a personal perspective (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009) for a number of reasons; the only commonality between the two was considered to be the roles as educational researchers. With the PNU participants particularly, I considered myself as an outsider due to the fact that no work had been carried out there previously. Moreover, with KSU participants, there are many reasons supporting my personal view of being an outsider, despite adopting a



working position. First and foremost, the data were collected from different schools in the education department; thus, many of the participants were not previously known to me as a researcher. Second, many of the participants from the early childhood school were new to me owing to me partaking in studies abroad since 2009, the year I have got my scholarship, however they wanted to participate because the topic was related to children. Third, the Q-sorting process was done in the researcher's absence, as this was the participants' preference for a number of reasons (discussed in Section 4.F.5(1) Recruiting Participants. p. 98). Moreover, the plan was to collect their perspectives about their Q-sorting after this had been done. Interview, as a data collection method was decided against, as required by the Q-methodology steps; instead, a questionnaire was preferred in an effort to avoid the discussing of opinions, as the sample could be colleagues. In this respect, in this thesis, the terms 'them', 'they' and 'the participants' are used to reaffirm the researcher's position and perspective as an objective outsider researcher is maintained (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

Wint's (2013) thesis was selected as a starting point in an effort to cover the Q-methodology concept from different aspects, ensuring a clear and well-organised manner. Wint (2013) was followed across the following points:

1. What is Q-methodology? This includes the background to Q-methodology, a brief explanation of Q-methodology, operant subjectivity, and Q-methodology as a quantitative or qualitative approach.
2. Why Q-methodology? This includes Q-methodology types of study, reasons for choosing Q-methodology as a method and the advantages and disadvantages of Q-methodology.

The process associated with implementing Q-methodology, is where the procedures are divided into seven steps: developing a comprehensive set of statements (Q-set), implementing the Q-sort, the sampling frame (P-set), data analysis, the questionnaire, conducting the interviews, and interpretation of results.

#### **4.D What is Q-methodology?**

This section explains Q-methodology across its different aspects.

#### ***4.D.1 Background of Q-methodology***

The first introduction to Q-methodology was made by Stephenson in 1935 in a letter sent to the journal 'Nature' (Stenner *et al.*, 2008; Wint, 2013), offering a new method, which was considered a practical method, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods (Wint, 2013). Stephenson settled on this method after obtaining PhDs in Physics and Psychology. His aim was concerned with changing the traditional technique of 'R' methodology (statistical methodology), which has an emphasis on people and variables, etc. (Watts & Stenner, 2012) to a technique that connects people to appropriate statements (Q-methodology) (Wint, 2013). His idea was to overturn the traditional 'R' methodology that focuses on variables, people, skills etc., which requires methodological examination (Watts & Stenner, 2012), to the Q-methodology, which identifies correlations between people (Wint, 2013). What is more, Stephenson sought people's perspectives about specific topics and then analysed their reactions as factors; thus, he correlated persons instead of tests (Hughes, 2012), which is the aim of Q-methodology. In this respect, Q-methodology is described as being: '*... designed expressly to explore the subjective dimension of any issue towards which different points-of-view can be expressed*' (Stenner *et al.*, 2008, p. 215).

Although Q-methodology emerged 80 years ago, it was not well-known for some time (Hughes, 2012); however, in the last 20 years, it has been introduced in the USA and the UK, as well as in other countries. Nowadays, there are many books and articles about Q-methodology available in different aspects (Watts & Stenner, 2012). It is worth mentioning that most Q-studies explore or discover ideas from specific groups in specific situations or at their institutions. Accordingly, the research questions of the Q-methodology should be simple, narrow and straightforward (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The research question in Q-methodology studies is considered a vital part of the study as it helps to draw the structure of the Q-statements for the researcher and further acts as a guideline for participants during the sorting process (Watts & Stenner, 2005).

#### ***4.D.2 Brief explanation of Q-methodology***

Q-methodology, in general, is described as '*... a set of procedures, theory and philosophy*' (Brown, 1993, p.4). However, from the literature review, different definitions of Q-methodology have been identified as covering different ideas, including

capturing subjectivity, the process of the Q-sort, and the extent to which it is a qualitative method or a mixed methods approach. On the one hand, Wint (2013) describes the foundation of Q-methodology as the idea of subjectivity; however, not only that, but Q-methodology also deals with participants as variables not as a single case study (Stenner *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, Watts (2013) indicates that the researcher adopting Q-methodology will find the reflection of participants' perspectives about the topic, which is what the present research requires, and not their views about themselves. Additionally, Woods (2012, p. 892) considers Q-methodology as '*a methodology developed for small-scale research with the aim of capturing and contrasting subjectivity*'. Furthermore, Hughes (2012, p. 61) illustrates the Q-methodology process as being '*a method that requires a participant to sort items according to some kind of criterion*'. These criteria include elements such as the degree to which participants agree, where the items are usually statements presented on cards. This explanation about Q-methodology has been pivotal and valuable in helping to clarify the researcher's own thoughts and further has increased her interest in choosing this method for study, which is centred on capturing educational researchers' perspectives towards ethics when involving children in research in the KSA.

#### **4.D.3 Operant subjectivity**

The foundation of Q-methodology is the idea of subjectivity (Wint, 2013), which is based on or influenced by personal opinions. In this respect subjectivity, as Brown (1997, p. 2) mentions, is:

*... everywhere, from the loftiest philosophizing and diplomatic negotiating to the street talk of the juvenile gang the self-talk of daydreamer, and it is the purpose of Q methodology to enable the person to represent his or her vantage point for purposes of holding it constant for inspection and comparison* (cited in Cross, 2005, p. 210).

Størksen and Thorsen (2008, p. 5), at a conference, showed that '*Q-methodology aims at exploring subjectivity, i.e. feeling, viewpoints, beliefs, opinion, preferences and values*' of participants. Accordingly, Watts (2013) stresses that Q-methodology reflects the participant's view, not the researcher's view, meaning the researcher can work in the participant's world. Q-methodology further allows the researcher to explore participants' perspectives, and therefore is recognised as one of the most effective approaches using both qualitative and quantitative research methods (Ward, 2010). Additionally, Cross (2005, p. 209) notes that the Q-sort is a '*self-directed process*',

indicating that it emerges from the person's self. Having the statements sorted by participants allows them to decide what is important and valuable from their perspectives (Ward, 2010). Moreover, it is worth mentioning that there are no right or wrong answers for participants' sorting, because the process shows their perspectives about the specific issue, meaning Q-methodology is considered '*a foundation for the systemic study of subjectivity*' (Brown, 1993, p. 2).

#### ***4.D.4 Q-methodology is a quantitative or qualitative approach?***

An argument exists as to whether Q-methodology is considered a qualitative or quantitative method, or otherwise a mixed methods. From the literature review, the majority consider this methodology a mixed methods approach. Hayne (1998, p. 8) claims that '*Q-methodology, an approach comprising both quantitative and qualitative method, was used to ascertain different perceptions amongst the sample*'. Q-methodology is mixed methods, combining the strong features from each approach. In Q-methodology, the researcher gathers the data in a qualitative way and accordingly analyses the data statistically, which is considered a quantitative approach. Additionally, the results will be in-depth (Elingsen *et al.*, 2010). Akhtar-Danesh *et al.* (2008, p. 759) found, from the use of Q-methodology in nursing research, that:

*Q-methodology has been identified as a method for the analysis of subjective viewpoints and has the strength of both qualitative and quantitative methods. It shares with qualitative methodologies the aim of exploring subjectivity; however, statistical techniques are used to reveal the structure of views.*

Also, Davis and Michelle (2011) stress that it is considered a mixed methods approach because the qualitative researcher sees it as quantitative and the quantitative researcher sees it as qualitative; it is also viewed as a multidisciplinary approach. Woods (2011) explains that Q-methodology is presented as quantitative but has a qualitative aim, and further illustrates that Q-methodology participants give the researcher accurate findings by sorting the statements to explore their beliefs and then express their views when interviewed. This present research achieved this by asking participants to complete a questionnaire after they had completed their sorting, and finally by interviewing some of them (explained later on in the implementation process of the Q-methodology section). Exploring different views from different groups acted as a resource to draw conclusions pertaining to attitudes and obstacles regarding children's participation in research about having their voices heard and implementing ethics procedures.

Quantitative researchers tend to construct Q-methodology as qualitative whilst qualitative researchers tend to emphasise the use of numbers in obtaining the results, and therefore often view it as a mixed or as a quantitative method. However, in some ways, discussions pertaining to the nature of Q-methodology are less important than an understanding surrounding what Q-methodology achieves. Q-methodology identifies a set of qualitatively different perspectives on the topic investigated; the perspectives are written up by the researcher to capture them holistically in verbal form rather than numerically. These different sets of perspectives are commonly referred to as ‘voices’; in other words, Q-methodology is used to identify qualitatively different points of view. It therefore is important to sample participants for diversity; that is, to include participants who can be expected to have wide-ranging and contrasting perspectives.

#### **4.E Why Q-methodology?**

For this study, three pilot studies were conducted, the first of which involved questionnaires with educational researchers and interviews with one Head Teacher of a children’s preschool, two stakeholders from the Ministry of Education, and two postgraduate students studying in the education department at KSU (see Appendix 1). The aim was to conduct face-to-face interviews, however all participants preferred answering the questionnaire and interview questions by email. Accordingly, their answers were limited and did not give clear findings. Furthermore, their preferences indicated that the participants were bored, possibly owing to the repetition of the instruments. In addition, the questionnaire method was found to be lacking in value in terms of obtaining subjective responses. Also, the response rate to open-ended questions was usually low, with the responses to such questions tending to induce difficulties when completing analysis. Consequently, Q-methodology was recognised as a valuable tool able to overcome these issues, and was considered exciting due to the fact it offers the potential to obtain ‘richer’ data.

As a researcher I have my own contention, although Q-methodology is viewed - from a personal perspective - as a mixed method approach, nonetheless, I do not view it as a mixed paradigm nor I do consider it as belonging to a quantitative paradigm because:

- It deals with subjectivity that has ordinal measurement (statisticians do not consider ordinal data quantitative).

- Sampling is for diversity, and there is no aim to draw statistical inference—and this relates to the sampling. Q-methodology does not sample randomly or aim at making a representative sample. The results state only the existence of certain perspectives.
- The perspectives then are explored as ‘voices’ through interviews to flesh out interpretation.
- Q-methodology is a mix of both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Hayne, 1998) to studies that measure perspectives using quantitative methods, such as the questionnaire (Punch, 2011), or qualitative method, such as the interview, which is considered a vital method for emphasising participants’ perspectives (Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Punch, 2011).

On the one hand however, the quantitative approach requires a large sample to obtain general findings, whereas the qualitative approach investigates a small population on an in-depth basis. In contrast, Q-methodology combines both approaches through the use of a small sample of participants (compared with the quantitative approach) in order to obtain deep findings (Hayne, 1998). In addition, Q-methodology is considered as:

*... a bridge between qualitative and quantitative research. It has the same level of mathematical rigor as quantitative methodology, it provides for direct measure, and it has an interpretive component comparable to that of qualitative methodology. It is designed to (a) elicit operant subjectivity and (b) directly measure the response. It is not about a person. It is of a person (Wilson, 2005, p. 37).*

All the above reasons were key to choosing this methodology; however, the most important reason was to capture participants’ viewpoints that would identify the level of subjectivity with which they considered/addressed the issue. As Hughes (2012, p. 58) mentions:

*I was keen to go beyond the notion of using method to transfer information from a research participant’s head into my own, as if I was emptying a vessel. If I was serious about voice, then I needed to explore and understand approaches that facilitate co-construction between researchers and researched.*

Thus, the Q-sort should identify what participants’ perspectives give to the subject, not only their perspectives in general (Wint, 2013) but the ‘social viewpoint’ (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 42).

#### ***4.E.1 Advantages and disadvantages of Q-methodology***

From his research, Hughes (2012) identifies a number of advantages associated with Q-methodology in that it gives the researcher the opportunity to listen to diverse voices, respect participants' viewpoints towards any topic rather than imposing their views, and respect participants regardless of whether they are adults or children. In addition, Wint (2013) mentions that it is a suitable method for a sensitive topic such as her study about Facebook bothering, where participants can express their opinion from their experience by sorting the Q-set without embarrassment. In addition, it strengthens the relationship between the researcher and participants as it reduces the power position of the researcher, owing to the fact the researcher gives the participants freedom when they sort the Q-set (Wint, 2013). Moreover, Plummer (2012) states that Q-methodology allows the researcher to gather numbers of shared viewpoints from different groups of participant, and after the analysis process, the researcher will find that each viewpoint is heard as an individual voice.

The main disadvantages some researchers have mentioned in regards to Q-methodology include validity and reliability issues, which are important elements for any type of 'R' methodology study (Watts & Stenner, 2012). In Q-methodology studies, validity and reliability can be implemented but in different ways: for instance, by asking the same participant to sort statements more than once. Also, after analysis of the data, if similar factors arise this will become apparent after the analysis (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

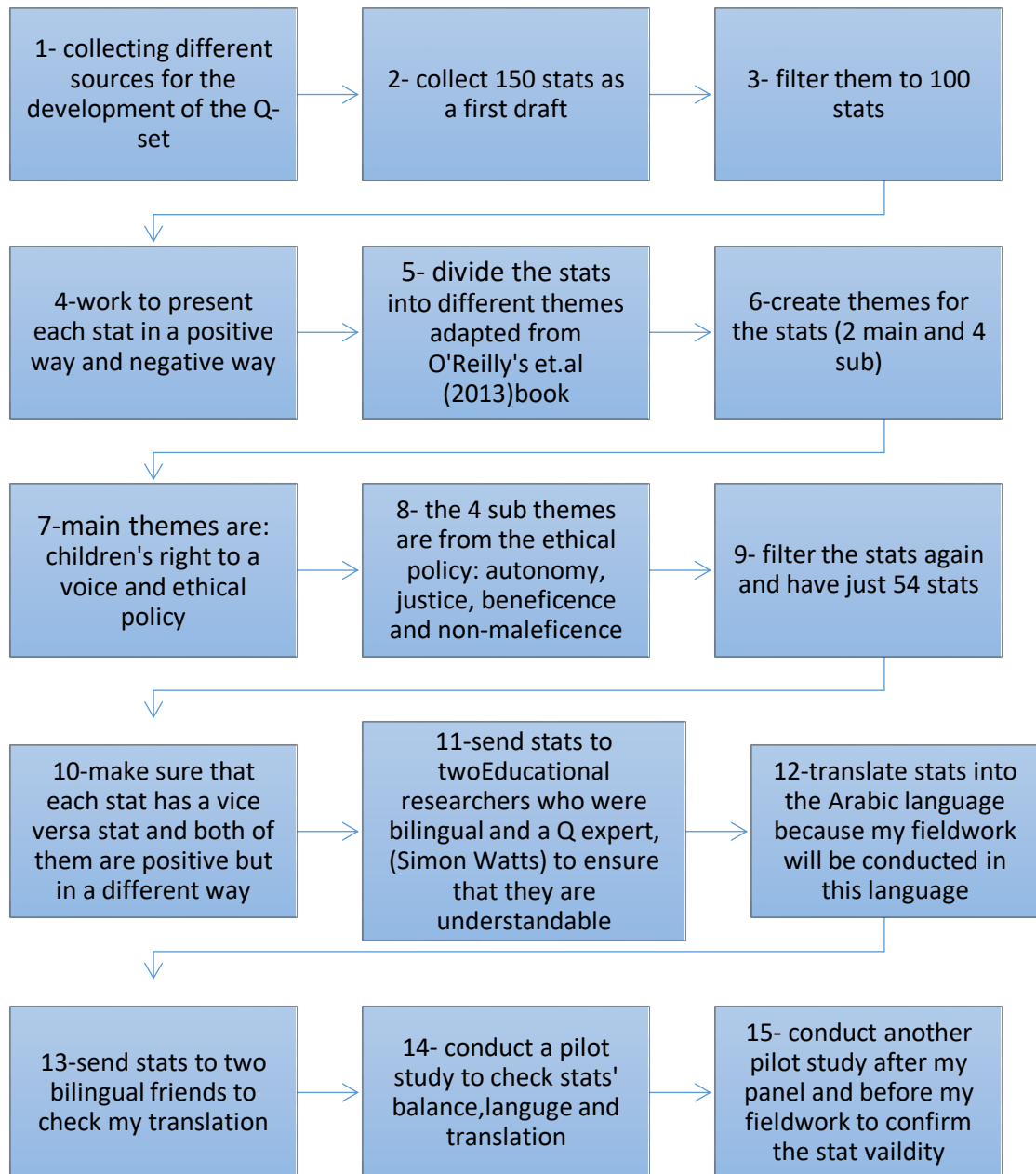
#### **4.F Implementing Q-methodology**

In this section, the procedures of data collection in Q-methodology are explained, both in general and how they have been applied in this research. The procedure was divided into seven steps, as follows:

1. Developing a comprehensive set of statements (Q-set)
2. Implementing the Q-sort
3. Sampling frame (P-set)
4. Completing the questionnaire
5. Conducting the interviews
6. Performing data analysis
7. Carrying out the interpretation.

#### 4.F.1 Developing a comprehensive set of statements (Q-set)

Figure 1 below shows the steps inherent in developing the Q-set a process that took six months to complete before establishing the final draft.



**Figure 1: Development of the Q-set**

In Q-methodology, the most important step is developing the statements (Hayne, 1998), known as the Q-set or, in some literature, the Q-sample. This is a set of items that often are presented as written statements (Wint, 2013) and given to participants to sort. However, in some cases it could be images as in the case of the study by Størksen *et al.* (2011), which was carried out with four-year-old children. Usually, the statements have



to be in the form of numerous statements, as Watts and Stenner (2012, p. 89) mention: *‘Ideally, items should be presented to participants on sensibly sized and laminated cards of a single colour and standard appearance’*. In the present study, the Q-set was written on cards. Furthermore, the statements could be from interviews with participants, literature reviews, or informal discussions: for example, Størksen *et al.* (2011) explain that the concourse of their study was from the findings of previous studies carried out in relation to the same topic of study. Researchers who use Q-methodology need to collect different statements from different sources in order to explore people’s opinions about a specific topic (Hughes, 2012), which should be representative of the issue, clear, appropriate for the participants, easy to understand, and applicable (Cross, 2005). What is more, Watts and Stenner (2012) reveal that the key aim of the Q-set is collecting items that cover the study topic and which can be linked to the research questions. The statements adopt a specific theory or create a theoretical framework, if it has not found a theory that matches with the topic variable, as is the case with this study. I therefore have followed the research guidelines for the US University of Southern California (Asher, 2013) and created the next figure.



**Figure 2: Diagram About How I Created My Theoretical Framework**

Thus, for this study, the statements were developed from different sources informed by my own cultural knowledge and professional experience. These were:

- A broad literature review focused on research ethics and children’s voice issues, both internationally and in the KSA in particular, including books, articles and reports, etc.
- The findings of the first pilot study, conducted in April 2013. These were obtained via a questionnaire with educational researchers at KSU in different fields in the education department, interviews with postgraduate students studying at KSU in the education department, interviews with stakeholders

working at the MOE, and an interview with a preschool Head Teacher (see Appendix 1).

- From the researcher's MSc course, the first year of my PhD offer, during which there was the completion of a focus group with PhD students in the education school and an interview with a lecturer who has experience of children's participation in research, the researcher partook in discussions about their experiences when having children participate in the research.
- Informal conversations with colleagues working at KSU as educational researchers in the early childhood field.
- Informal emails with a policymaker from the Ministry of Education in KSA.
- My own experience as a Saudi educational researcher who has involved children in research (such as in the case of the MA dissertation from the University of Sheffield).

All these sources informed the development of the theoretical framework for the Q-statements. The result was at first that 150 statements were developed and in order to avoid any duplication these were then filtered to remove similar statements (Plummer, 2012; Wint, 2013), after which the number was reduced to 100. Also, statements were paraphrased with only one idea in order to make them easy to understand. What is more, the researcher chose positive wording to achieve the opposite, making the negative positive but in a different way. Setting up the statements in the first person (I) or (My) was the preferable approach; however, in this study, a highly educated sample was used, meaning this was considered not necessary (Plummer, 2012).

It was found that there was only one key theme, the *ethics issue*, and so the decision was made to focus on this area in order to increase awareness of research ethics when working with child subjects in the KSA. Moreover, the results of the one Saudi study, pertaining to research ethics in KSA, identified that research has to direct more attention to the research ethics of the government, raise research ethics awareness across the Saudi community and, accordingly, form ethical guidelines for researchers (Al-habeeb & Abukarem, 2012). In this respect, the Q-set was divided into two main groups: children's right to a voice and ethical policy. This provided a framework to scope the various dimensions of ethical considerations. It is a valuable framework, as it was established that researchers who include children in their research want to have a real

image about children's worlds because '*no one can tell us better than children themselves about what childhood at any given point feels like*' (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013, p. 77). Thus, if we give children a voice to enable them to participate in research, this obligates the researcher to present ethical guidelines and give the children the right to be listened to (Grover, 2004). Furthermore, James and James (2008) mention that there are two key elements upon which any research with children has to build: the power relations between children and adults, and the ethics issue. What is more, until recently, researchers have been slow to recruit children as research participants owing to the dilemma about related ethical issues (Christensen & James, 2008).

When the process of gathering statements was first initiated, notably based on the ethics issue, the decision was made to be more specific, and so there was the addition of the theme of children's right to a voice because links between this concept and the ethics issue had been identified. Subsequently, four principles were included, namely respect for autonomy, justice, non-maleficence and beneficence (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013). It is worth mentioning the rationale behind choosing the book by O'Reilly *et al.* (2013) - *Research with children: Theory and practices* - as the theory fitted well with the process, which meant it was easier because including these categories facilitated adoption of this conceptual framework, which can be adapted and applied in different research contexts. Also, it is very well-organised; it divides the ethics concept into four principles and explicates them clearly. Moreover, the language used in the book is simple and easy to understand, and covers the ethics concept from different aspects. The four principles became sub-themes, which underscored the relevance of my interest, which is in line with the UNCRC Article 12, on listening to children's voices and respecting them (Alderson & Morrow, 2011), and Article 13, which gives children the right to get and share information as long as it is not damaging to them or to others (The Welsh Government's UNCRC Website, 2011).

Thus, to underpin the statements (Q-set) for this study, the choice was made to adopt a framework using the four principles devised by O'Reilly *et al.* (2013) and the idea of voice to structure the Q-set by drawing on other literature, documentation and professional experience. Wint (2013, p. 46) found that: *The process of extracting a Q-set from the larger concourse usually involves some sort of classification process where statements are grouped under broad categories or themes.* What is more, the statements

should not overlap, the language must be clear, and the researcher must try to reduce ambiguity to the greatest possible degree and finally the statements have to be understandable for all (Wint, 2013). In the end, these statements became narrower, more specific, and clearer for the participants, which became apparent after long discussions with the researcher's supervisors and friends. The statements were sent by the researcher to two friends to read to ensure that they were clear and understandable. In addition, they also were sent to a Q-expert, Simon Watts, who has published a number of books and articles in the field of Q-methodology. He provided comments geared towards improving some of the statements, which were discussed with the researcher's own supervisors, with changes made as a result. The second pilot study (see Appendix 2) was then carried out with three Saudi PhD students studying in the UK, prior to which they had been working at Saudi universities as educational researchers. They also gave some comments relating to the language of the statements and the translation, as statements were written using both languages - i.e. Arabic and English - with the process performed in Arabic. The decision was made to do it in this way because the fieldwork would be in Arabic as it is the first language of Saudi Arabia.

For this study, a total of 54 statements were developed, covering all aspects of the topic. These 54 statements were sufficient as the standard number of statements for a Q-methodology study commonly ranges between 40 and 80 depending on the topic (Watts & Stenner, 2012). In summary, it is not only criteria, such as balance and coverage, that determine the size of the Q-set, but also the number of statements falling within the usual range expected of Q-methodology studies. As Wilson (2005, p. 44) mentions:

*The researcher presented the Q sample for sorting by several acquaintances in order to gather opinions regarding the size of the sample, syntax of the statements, and effectiveness of conditions of instruction.*

What is more, great care was taken to ensure that each statement matched the correct theme as this would increase the internal validity and reliability of the research (Hayne, 1998) and provide balanced, boundless and coverage statements for the participants (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Ensuring the balance of statements means full coverage of different opinions of the topic being related to the research questions, where each positive statement has a negative one but has the same concept, which is more important than just being positive or negative (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Also, to be sure of the

statements' criteria, these were translated into Arabic, the language in which the study was to be implemented, with the resulting translation reviewed with two bilingual colleagues. The third pilot study then was conducted with three Saudi educational researchers (not those who participated in the second pilot study) to garner their opinions about the language of the statements, numbers, and length of time required for sorting. The findings showed that the three researchers were happy with the language and they liked the idea of the Q-methodology; however, they commented that it took a long time to sort the statements—notably between 45 minutes and one hour. However, when asked why they needed to take this length of time, their responses were as follows: *The process is divided into three steps, I have to read all statements first then I sorted them into two categories, the agree statements then the disagree statements and after that I sorted each category from 1-5 in both sides.* Another said: *The topic is new for me so I have to read the statements more than once.* The third one commented: *It is a very long process, I had to read the statements more than once, sort them then review my sorting if it is right or not! So I did the Q-sort twice.* (Pilot study 2 report shown in Appendix 2)

**Table 2: Q-statements**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Statement sources</b>
<b>Children's Right to a Voice</b>	<b>CR (1):</b> I am unfamiliar with the concept of children's right to a voice.	Bashatah (2011)
	<b>CR (2):</b> I have a good understanding of the concept of children's right to a voice.	Bashatah (2011)
	<b>CR (3):</b> The same attention to ethics is needed when working with adults as with child research participants.	Mukherji and Albon (2011)
	<b>CR (4):</b> Attention to research ethics is especially important just when working with child participants.	Mukherji and Albon (2011)
	<b>CR (5):</b> My main reason for including child participants in research would be because they are a useful source of data.	Shaw <i>et al.</i> (2011)
	<b>CR (6):</b> It is my duty as an educational researcher to include children in research.	Al-habeeb and Abukarem (2012)

	<b>CR (7):</b> I would include children in research because it would benefit my career.	Al-habeeb and Abukarem (2012)
	<b>CR (8):</b> I would include children as participants in research to allow their voice to be heard.	Geldnhuys and Doubell (2011)
	<b>CR (9):</b> I believe that only children can represent themselves.	Mukherji and Albon (2011)
	<b>CR (10):</b> I believe that adults can represent children's viewpoints.	Mukherji and Albon (2011)
	<b>CR (11):</b> Including children as research participants allows their viewpoints to be heard.	Geldenhuis and Doubell (2011)
	<b>CR (12):</b> If I include children as participants in my research, it will be my researcher supervisor's decision.	My experience as a Saudi researcher.
	<b>CR (13):</b> If you want to understand educational experience, children are the people to ask.	Findings from the MSc assignment (1 <sup>st</sup> year PhD)
	<b>CR (14):</b> The opinions of educational experts are more valuable than children's views because children are too young to have useful ideas and suggestions.	Informal conversation with my Saudi colleague at KSU.
<b>Ethical Policy</b>	<b>Ethics (15):</b> Some Saudi children might find it difficult to refuse to participate in research if asked by an adult.	Informal conversation with my Saudi colleague at KSU.
	<b>Ethics (16):</b> Most Saudi children have the confidence to decline to take part in research	My experience as Saudi researcher.
	<b>Ethics (17):</b> Asking participants to sign western-style consent forms could seem strange/inappropriate for participants in the Saudi context.	My experience as Saudi researcher.
	<b>Ethics (18):</b> Procedures for taking consent as required at western Universities would be useful for raising awareness about research ethics in the KSA.	Comments from the 2nd pilot study.
	<b>Ethics (19):</b> Universities have the responsibility to provide training courses in research ethics.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)

	<b>Ethics (20):</b> Special training courses on ethics for researchers is unnecessary in the KSA.	Dimond (2010) questionnaire.
	<b>Ethics (21):</b> My institution has their own ethical form to use with participants in research.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<b>Ethics (22):</b> It is my duty to create my own ethical form to use with participants in research.	Informal email from Saudi stakeholder (2013)
	<b>Ethics (23):</b> Ethics forms and procedures are designed to only protect and ensure the respect of the participants.	Alderson and Morrow (2011)
	<b>Ethics (24):</b> Ethics forms and procedures are designed to protect and ensure the respect of researchers.	The ethics forms from Manchester University.
	<b>Ethics (25):</b> As an educational researcher I believe that having ethics forms and procedures helps me when planning my fieldwork.	Mukherji and Albon (2011)
	<b>Ethics (26):</b> Completing ethics forms and procedures for my research takes a long time.	Informal email from my colleague at KSU.
	<b>Ethics (27):</b> It should be compulsory to follow ethical guidelines when conducting research with children.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<b>Ethics (28):</b> Following ethical guidelines when conducting research with children should be optional.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
<b>Respect for Autonomy</b>	<b>Autonomy (29):</b> It is essential that child participants are given regular reminders that they can withdraw from the research if they feel uncomfortable or upset.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<b>Autonomy (30):</b> Once the child and their parents have consented to taking part, it is important that they are encouraged to complete the study.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<b>Autonomy (31):</b> Children lack real understanding about what it means to decide upon participating in research.	Spriggs (2010)

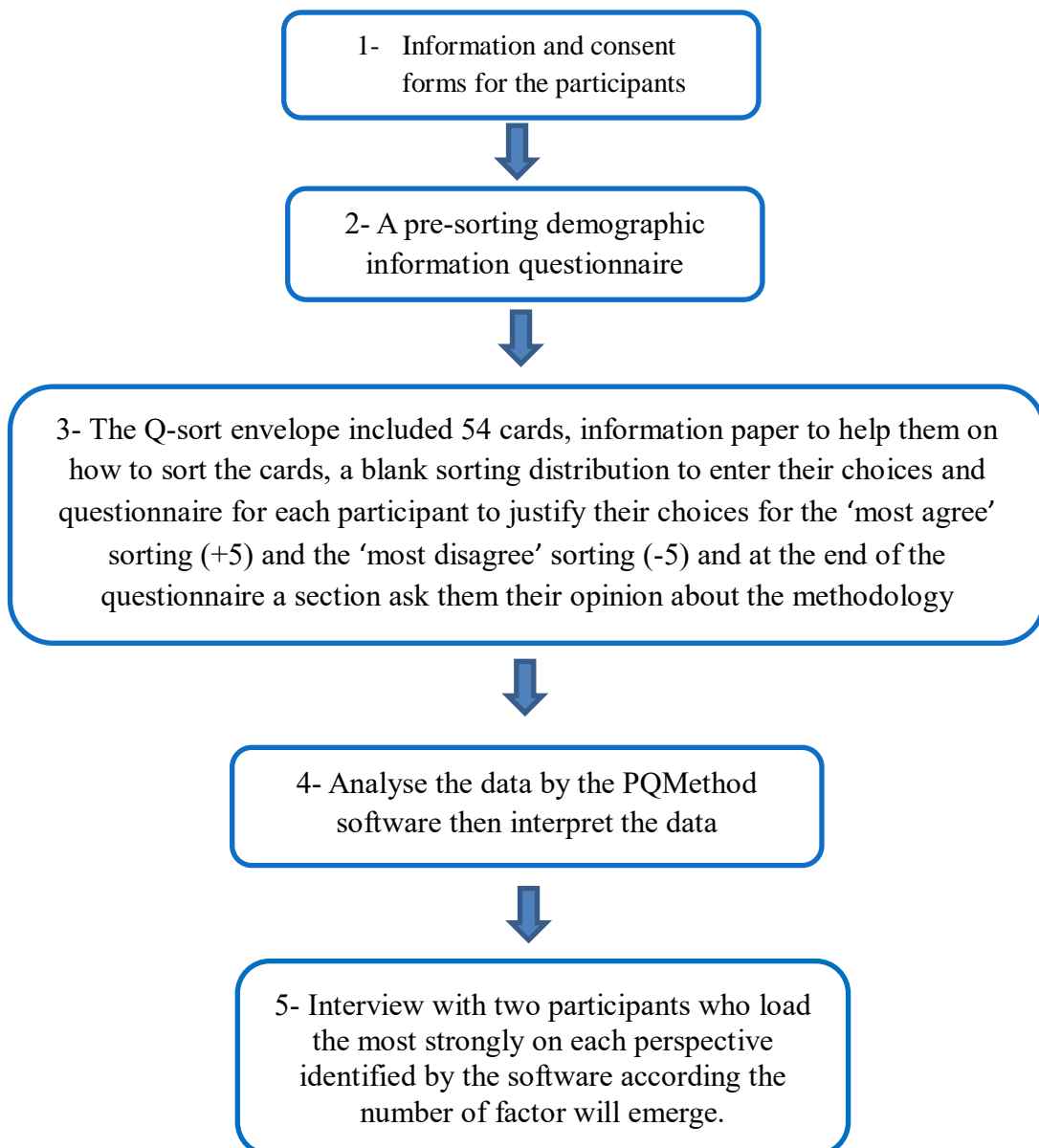


	<b>Autonomy (32):</b> It is the child's right to get detailed explanation about the research steps in order to decide upon their participation.	Spriggs (2010)
	<b>Autonomy (33):</b> It is the child's right to be given enough time to decide whether to participate or not.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<b>Autonomy (34):</b> Giving children time to decide whether or not to participate in research is unnecessary.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<b>Autonomy (35):</b> I believe obtaining parent's permission for their child's participation is enough, without asking the child.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<b>Autonomy (36):</b> In my view the researcher should obtain consent from both the parents and the child to include a child in research.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<b>Autonomy (37):</b> Informing children about the nature of the research is vital because it helps them to decide about their participation.	Alderson and Morrow (2011)
	<b>Autonomy (38):</b> Informing children about the research plan is pointless because they are too young to understand.	Alderson and Morrow (2011)
<b>Justice</b>	<b>Justice (39):</b> Researchers should try to capture the experiences of as wide a range of children as possible in research (e.g. in terms of ability, ethnicity, age, etc.).	Alderson and Morrow (2011)
	<b>Justice (40):</b> For practical reasons, the perspectives of some groups of children will tend to be more prominent in research than others.	Alderson & Morrow (2011)
	<b>Justice (41):</b> The researchers should capture the voices of children of both genders (boys and girls) in their research.	Alderson and Morrow (2011)
	<b>Justice (42):</b> As a researcher I prefer to include only one gender (girls or boys) in my research because it is easier.	Alderson and Morrow (2011)

	<b>Justice (43):</b> As an educational researcher I have to ensure that all children are enjoying their participation in research.	NatCen Course (10-10-2013)
	<b>Justice (44):</b> The researcher's aim is to collect data from all children in their study regardless of whether or not they are enjoying their participation.	NatCen Course (10-10-2013)
<b>Beneficence</b>	<b>Beneficence (45):</b> It is the children's right to know about the research outcome.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<b>Beneficence (46):</b> It is unnecessary to share the findings of the research with children.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<b>Beneficence (47):</b> The researcher could give children an incentive to participate, beforehand.	NatCen Course (10-10-2013)
	<b>Beneficence (48):</b> The researcher has to give children an incentive after the research to thank them for their participation.	NatCen Course (10-10-2013)
<b>Non-maleficence</b>	<b>Non-M (49):</b> The researcher has to respect children's wish about revealing their identity.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<b>Non-M (50):</b> The researcher has to be sensitive to when it might be necessary to reveal a child participant's identity to a third party.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<b>Non-M (51):</b> The researcher only has to inform the parents, not the child, about potential risks that their child might face while participating in the research.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<b>Non-M (52):</b> The researcher has to inform both the parents and children about potential risks to help them decide whether or not to take part.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<b>Non-M (53):</b> In research it is the children's right to withhold their answers from their parents.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<b>Non-M (54):</b> Parents have a right to see the responses of their children in research studies because their child is under age.	O'Reilly <i>et al.</i> (2013)

#### 4.F.2 Implementing the Q-sort

For this study, the data were gathered from the participants in different ways. To begin with, they were provided with a short questionnaire to ascertain their demographic information. They then completed the Q-sort, followed by a questionnaire to clarify their statement selection, and after the Q-sort analysis, interviews were carried out with the two participants who loaded most strongly on to each of the identified ‘voice’ profiles. To implement the Q-sort, six steps needed to be completed, as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: The Q-steps**

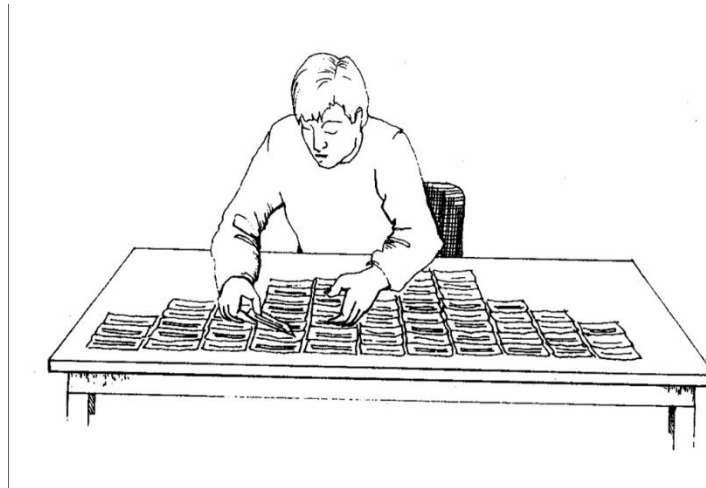
It should be noted that, because of the culture of Saudi Arabia and the education system in spirit, the Q-sort step was conducted face-to-face only with females. This meant the researcher was located in a room in the female section, with female participants in this section. With the males at KSU, a network system was used involving the researcher using a screen to see the subjects but where the researcher could not be seen; however, a communication phone was used for contact if they wanted to ask any questions.

Following the implementation steps shown in Figure 2 above, the participants were asked to sign the consent form first to indicate that they wanted to participate in the study. Subsequently, the participants were asked to complete the demographic information questionnaire, after which they were provided with an envelope containing 54 statement cards, an information sheet to help them with sorting the cards and a blank sorting distribution to enter their choice. They were informed that there was no right or wrong way to sort the statement cards (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

The Q-sort is the procedure allowing participants to give their own perspectives towards an issue by ranking statements on a distribution frame that the researcher has given them (Wint, 2013). For this study, the participants needed to read all the statements and then begin two categories: one for agree statements and the other for disagree statements. Subsequently, they organised each category (agree and disagree) sorting the statements for each ‘... *according to how much they feel statements represent their view*’ (Wint, 2013, p. 53). They then needed to decide which were the two most common agree statements (+5), and organise them from (+4 to +1), with the same done for the disagree statements, beginning with the two most common disagree statements (–5). Any without an opinion were placed in the (0) column.

In general, there are two kinds of Q-sorting distribution: free and forced-choice (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The second pilot study identified that making the distribution forced-choice and balanced would make the process easier for the participants, and it also represented a convenient means of facilitating the subjective evolutions. For this study, the decision was made to choose forced-choice as this would provide the data in a way closer to the normal distribution. Although free distribution gives the participants more freedom and space, arguably it would not provide any additional information and would take more time for participants to complete in deciding how to make their distribution decisions (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Figure 4 presents the Q-methodology blank sorting





**Figure 5: Completing the Q-sort**

After the participants completed sorting the cards, they then were asked to complete the questionnaire so as to explain their reasons for sorting the statements with which they most agreed or disagreed. They also were asked to comment on their experience of completing the Q-sort (see Appendix 4-b).

The plan was to conduct the Q-sort in a room with small groups of participants comprising no more than six in each group, and to have the Q-sort session times fit in with the availability of the educational researcher participants. The sessions were to be conducted separately at each university, KSU and PNU, which would enable the researcher to be on hand to answer any questions whilst also accommodating the needs of busy professionals. However, the plan changed and the process could not be conducted face-to-face, as explained in the recruiting sample section (p. 93)

#### ***4.F.3 The questionnaire***

For this study, a questionnaire rather than interview approach was used to interpret the responses of the participants after the Q-sort. The reason for this was to overcome the issue of distance, as experienced by the researcher, and thus avoid discussing the issues with colleagues as this could once again raise the issue of the researcher being an insider researcher. In addition, the questionnaire answers helped to identify the reasons for their choices and their opinions pertaining to the methodology in general.

Furthermore, the questionnaire allowed the participants to identify any unclear statements and to make suggestions for new statements or other ways of implementing the Q-methodology (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

#### 4.F.4 Conducting the interview with the top higher factors

The interviews with the educational researcher participants were considered an essential step in the Q-methodology. The open informal interviews were conducted by the researcher with those participants who had loaded most strongly on each of the identified ‘voice’ profiles. For this study, there were five participants, as identified in Table 3.

**Table 3: Top Higher Factors**

<b>The factor</b>	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Factor 3</b>	<b>Factor 4</b>	<b>Factor 5</b>
<b>Highest loading Participant on the factor</b>	Q-Sort No. 27	Q-Sort No. 7	Q-Sort No. 15	Q-Sort No. 9	Q-Sort No. 34

Thus, five of the participants were interviewed; this was valuable to the researcher in the sense of exploring loading strongly on one or another of the identified voice profiles, such as by coding and dividing them into themes based on the statements (Hayne, 1998); and further allowed better understanding of the nuances of the identified voices, which was useful in gaining a deeper understanding of the Q-sort profiles. There are many advantages associated with this kind of interview, including that it extracted more information from the participants, which then would inform the first research question: *What are the perspectives of educational researchers and policymakers towards the ethics of children’s participation in research?* Moreover, it helped in checking perspectives and comparing their choices and the factor arrays from the analysis (Wint, 2013). It also facilitated the wider exploration of participants’ perspectives towards the ethics of children’s participation in research and further investigated the way statements were placed on the distribution and why they chose this statement as the strongest one (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

The interview questions for the top higher participants factors were as follows:

1. From your perspective, why are these statements that you have chosen as (+5) and (–5) very important to you?
2. Which of these statements most presents your perspective towards the ethics of children’s participation in research?

3. Why did you choose this perspective?
4. Do you have any comments about this perspective?
5. Could you please, in general, tell me your views on ethics when children participate in research? (Do you agree, neutral or disagree?)

In order to boost the validity of the interview analysis with the Q-sort participant I followed 5 steps:

1-Transcribed the interviews in Arabic language as this was the language in which the interviews were conducted;

2-Translated the interviews into English language;

3-Presented the transcripts to my supervisor to read;

4-Discussed my interpretation of the interviews with my supervisor. We then decided together how to best use this valuable information and how to present it within the discussion chapter for maximum strength.

It should be noted that the interview were shorts and straightforward because their purpose was to identify the strongest perspectives of the Q-participants and to use their feedback on the use of the Q-set in order to increase the face-validity of the data collected.

#### ***4.F.5 Sampling frame (P-set)***

Q-methodology participants are described as the P-set (Wint, 2013). From Q-methodology studies, the researcher is seen to reveal the selected perspectives from the group of participants (Watts & Stenner, 2005), where the findings do not depend on the number of participants but rather on the general idea of the issue's subject (Van Exel *et al.*, 2007). However, Punch (2011) indicates that there is no study without sampling, whether quantitative or qualitative. The available sample can generate the data and help to achieve the research aim (Punch, 2011). For this research, the snowball method, defined as '*a small number of individuals who have the characteristics in which they are interested*' (Cohen *et al.*, 2011, p. 158), was used. This method, as Hayne (1998) notes, is suitable for a Q-methodology study.

The Q-participants in this work numbered between 40 and 60; which is considered the ideal range for a Q-methodology study (Stenner *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, the participants of a Q-methodology study have to be fewer in number than the statements



for it to be a valuable study and easy to analyse (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Regarding this concept, and so as to include a variety of perspectives, the research participants for this study numbered 52, comprising educational researchers from two universities within Riyadh, and a range of different schools within the education departments, as indicated in Table 3 below.

First, there were educational researchers working in education departments from different universities in Riyadh city. For KSU, they were male and female participants with doctorates who have studied in the KSA or abroad. Also, the education college is considered one of the larger departments at the universities in Riyadh city, which provided a wider range of participant profiles, including those of age, length of experience in the field and background, such as study outside/inside the KSA. As the researcher had herself worked at KSU for six years (2003–2008), she was well-positioned to gain access. At PNU, the participants were females because they do not have males at this university; it is recognised as the first female university in Saudi Arabia. Further, at PNU, the researcher enjoyed good relationships with educational researchers due to being in the same field, and had met several at education events, such as conferences.

The reason for including participants who have studied inside the KSA is that the ethical procedures and forms might be new to them, and the concept of children's rights unfamiliar. The researcher sought to capture and identify their own perspectives about these issues. Moreover, the study could help to convince them about this issue, meaning they then would implement it in their own future research (Wint, 2013).

**Table 4: Participant Categories**

<b>Educational researchers</b>		
<b>Participants</b>		
King Saud University The Education Department		Princess Nourah Bint Abdullrhman University The Education Department
<b>Female department</b>	<b>Male department</b>	<b>Female department only</b>
1- Islamic Studies section	1- Islamic Studies section	1-General Education section
2- Art section	2- Art section	2- -----
3- Special Education section	3- Special Education section	3- Special Education section
4- Educational Administration section	4- Educational Administration section	4- Education Planning & Administration section
5- Education Technology section	5- Education Technology section	5- Education Technology section
6- Psychology section	6- Psychology section	6- Psychology section
7- Curriculum & Instruction section	7- Curriculum & Instruction section.	7- Curriculum & Instruction section
8- Education Policies & Kindergarten	-----	8- Early Childhood section

All the education department schools were chosen by the researcher in order to cover the fullest range, as indicated in Table 4. Although not all of them include children in their research, some of them are interested in children’s issues: for example, some educational researchers work in the Curriculum and Instruction section, with research centred on children’s curriculum.

***4.F.5(1) Recruiting participants***

As shown in the participant categories of Table 3 above, the decision was made to use all the schools within the education department of each university, encompassing both genders at KSU and only females from PNU, and only those with doctorates.

When I contacted both universities they gave permission to apply the methodology chosen, which was face-to-face with females and by screen network with males. The fieldwork was started at KSU because I am working there; however, there were delays. First, the Vice-Dean of each of the schools had to be informed. Thus, the plan changed and I attended PNU first in order to start collecting data from them until KSU had responded. Unfortunately, the communication from PNU advised that contact with the doctors directly could not be facilitated, meaning the administration assistant would send them an email to inform them about the study and methodology. After one week, KSU give permission for the researcher to contact potential participants.

The first difficulty encountered was with the male participants, who did not collaborate with me when I contact them by email or called them by phone to participate in this study. Then one of them, a male, advised me to send to them an envelope containing the Q-set, the demographic information questionnaire, the Q-distribution sheet and the after sorting Q-set questionnaire. Also included were the Q-methodology steps and the researcher's contact number and email address should they require further explanation. The plan was to contact 14 males, two participants from each school; nonetheless, 20 Q-methodology envelopes were sent to KSU in case anyone else wanted to participate. Unfortunately, however, not a single male wanted to participate; nobody replied to my attempts. Thus, the decision was made to focus on only females at both universities.

The KSU female section was the first location, with the procedure involving contact with the director of each school in the education department and providing an explanation about Q-methodology. I then advised on how to recruit the participants because it was voluntary participation. Unfortunately, however, all the directors advised that they could not participate on a face-to-face basis because of the time it would take. Thus, the decision was made that they would be given the Q-methodology envelope and they would complete the task when they had time, either at home or at work, but they did not want to sit with a group as suggested. Furthermore, regarding their staff, they advised that I contact one staff member, who would then tell her colleagues (snowball sampling). The sample utilised was to be only participants with doctorates and only 52 from both universities were needed. After the males excluded themselves, males were entirely removed from the study, which in turn caused the second difficulty to emerge.

As a researcher I made the decision to attend one of the universities each day to ask if anyone would be interested in participating in the study. Accordingly, the timetable involved spending one day at KSU and the next at PNU, with this process repeated for a month. Each doctor was approached in a polite and appropriate manner, with an explanation provided on the methodology to give an idea about the study topic. Most who agreed to participate preferred to take the Q-methodology envelope with them and asked that it be collected from them after one week. Only five preferred to partake in the process face-to-face; three from KSU and two from PNU. Others apologised for not having the time to participate, whereas others were not interested in the topic or about learning a new research instrument in KSA. Those who were not interested in the topic thought that my subject was about children; thus, they would have had to have experience with children in order to participate. This was clarified, and although some changed their minds and agreed to participate, most of them did not. After one month, there were just 10 participants from both universities, with just two of them performing the Q-sort face-to-face. This meant there were only two months remaining to collect the data. At this stage, consideration was made as to whether or not amendments could be made to the sample criteria in order to collect another 42 participants. The educational research experts at the universities advised that lecturers be included as they would have completed Master's degrees and some of them would have participated in other research studies with doctors, whereas others would have long experience, meaning there was a potentially great benefit from including them. Their inclusion at this stage was seen to have no detrimental effect on the data but would increase the number of participants, and so the decision was made to make this change. Accordingly, contact was made with the researcher's friends, who are lecturers and who then were asked to provide the names of other potential recruits to the study. This process was repeated each day in order to generate new participants. Eventually, the number of participants increased from 10 to 32.

The third difficulty faced was that some participants, who had completed the Q-sort, forgot to answer other questions, such as the demographic information, their choice of justification for the most common agree and most disagree statements, and their opinions on the Q-methodology as a new research tool in KSA. This meant that not all 32 responses were valid; thus, the originators of the incomplete responses were approached in order to achieve complete data collection.

Participation by the lecturers facilitated the collection of a larger sample from each school, although the doctoral participants were the majority. In the end, a total of 52 participants, eight from PNU and 44 from KSU, were involved. The majority were from KSU, as the number of Saudi staff at KSU is far higher than at PNU, and KSU is bigger and older than PNU. It is worth mentioning that, as the researcher is from the Early Childhood School, in KSU and the topic area is related to children, the majority of the participants were from this school as they, too, hold an interest in children's issues, with some of those colleagues.

#### **4.G Data analysis**

The Q-analysis identifies the differences and similarities between the participants (Hayne, 1998). Some statistical programs, such as SPSS (now IBM SPSS), can analyse responses; they are not recommended as they do not provide such accurate results as the PQmethod (Watts & Stenner, 2012), although some studies have used the SPSS package and obtained similar results to those garnered through Hayne's study (1998). Instead, the PQMethod software (available free from [www.Irz-muenchen.de/~schmolck/qmethod/](http://www.Irz-muenchen.de/~schmolck/qmethod/). p. 94) was used for analysis as this runs on Windows, e.g. the factor arrays are produced by the PQ software (Watts & Stenner, 2012); it is easy to use, shows the initial for each person automatically, and presents the factors in a straightforward way (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Each factor shows a pattern of a person's perspectives, where this factor represents an individual level of statistical correlation and, at the end, shows the pattern of Q-factors (Hughes, 2012). The factors emerge as a family of subjective responses linked to one another; the factors in Q emerge from a person's feelings, so it is about their subjectivity, not about themselves (Wilson, 2005). Following the completion of the analysis, the voices were presented in tables, with each viewpoint explained in separate paragraphs, as Ernest (2011) suggests, in an effort to illustrate the differences and similarities amongst the groups.

##### ***4.G.1 Data analysis by PQMethod software***

Once the data collection had been completed, it was time to analyse the data through the use of the PQMethod software. This software has been recommended in many studies; it provides accurate results and is easy to use. However, as it was the researcher's first time using this software, the book *Doing Q Methodological Research Theory, Method*

*and Interpretation* (Watts & Stenner, 2012) was followed, which explains the process step-by-step.

#### ***4.G.2 Downloading PQMethod software***

The PQMethod software had to be downloaded from the link ([www.Irz-muenchen.de/~schmolck/qmethod/](http://www.Irz-muenchen.de/~schmolck/qmethod/)) referred to in the book; however, this failed. The correct link (<http://schmolck.org/qmethod>) then was obtained by emailing Simon Watts, a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Nottingham Trent University and one of the authors of the aforementioned book. Moreover, as I am a researcher who had attended a course with him and found him very helpful, this was deemed a good solution to the problem. Others contacted included Stephen Jeffares, a lecturer in Public Policy and Director of Doctoral Research at the University of Birmingham, also due to the fact that I had attended a course with him, and Peter Schmolck, the creator of the PQMethod, who sent the correct link for the software. The link led to a very helpful website, which provided great details on how to download the PQMethod as it had a PQManual section. The download steps were easy, however the program did not work on the designated laptop, meaning an alternative machine had to be used.

#### ***4.G.3 Entering my statements (Q-set)***

At this stage, a name for the project had to be chosen, (My Study 8), with the number of statements (54) needing to be entered. This was saved as a notepad file in the project folder.

#### ***4.G.4 Entering my data (the Q-sort)***

At this stage, the Q-sort data had to be entered for all participants. Each participant was given an identification number. The data for each participant were entered, following which the Q-sort data were saved as a .dat file in the project folder. At this stage, the data were ready for analysis.

#### ***4.G.5 Extracting the factors***

At this stage, the data were entered and Option 3 was selected from the main menu (QCENT). An initial factor solution of 7 was chosen in line with the recommendation made by Watts and Stenner (2012, p. 197): ‘... 7 as a typical starting point for most data

sets', which is a size similar to the data set in this study. Above 36 participants, Watts and Stenner (2012, p. 197) recommend a 7-factor solution as a starting point. Indeed, it is stated that '*this is the maximum amount that PQMethod will allow*'.

#### **4.G.6 Rotating the factors**

After entering number 7 to rotate the factors, a message appeared asking whether the PQROT program should be used to flag the factors. As advised in the book, NO was chosen at this stage. Subsequently, a calculation to achieve the significant factor loading for the study was carried out:  $2.58 \times (1/\sqrt{\text{No. of items in the Q-set}})$ . For this study, the answer was  $2.58 \times (1/\sqrt{54}) = 2.58 \times (0.136) = 0.35$ . Following, the program gave a list of the seven factors and the confounded Q-sort participants, as well as the non-significant Q-sort.

#### **4.G.7 Flagging the factors (or creating the factor arrays)**

At this stage, the Enter key was used to rotate the factor matrix to flag the factors. In their book, Watts and Stenner (2012) recommend not allowing the program to flag the factor automatically; instead, the researcher should choose the factor. The program then asked for the number of the factor to be flagged; the numbers of the Q-sort requiring factor array creation were inputted, with a space left between each number, before pressing Enter. The program then asked which factors were to be written out to the .list file. The list was chosen by leaving a space between each number and pressing the Enter key. In the end, Option 7 was chosen from the main menu (QANALYZE) to create the output file as a WordPad file.

It is worth mentioning that, although the significant factor loading for the study =0.35 gave seven factors, the value (0.45) was used, giving five factors as this gave a solution that could be more readily interpreted, whilst losing little of the explained variance of the model. Wint (2013, p. 71) comments that:

*Factor solutions for one to five rotated factors were each computed. When deciding on the best solutions, consideration was given to: (...) Significantly loading Q-sorts (all factors had at least two participants who loaded at the  $\pm 0.35$  critical value, although this level was increased where appropriate to maximise the number of participants loading on a factor.*

However, although validity and reliability in Q-methodology is not considered a problem as in 'R' methodology, repeating the direction of the Q-sort with each

participant and finding similar factors from the researcher analysis in Q-methodology, is considered reliable (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

#### ***4.G.8 Factor analysis and interpretation***

Analysing the factors is considered the method for categorising the Q-sort as variables (Brown, 1980) and the '*analysis of the Q-sorts is a purely technical, objective procedure—and is therefore sometimes referred to as the scientific base of Q*' (Van Exel & de Graaf, 2005, p. 8). However, analysis gives the researcher factors that are the viewpoints of the participants, which are formed from similar views of one group; this means that all the participants who have the same view will be categorised under one factor (Van Exel & de Graaf, 2005; Punch, 2011; Wint, 2013). Also, Brown (1980, p. 208) mentions that: '*if two persons are likeminded on a topic, their Q-sorts will be similar and they will both end up on the same factor*'. Subsequently, the factor is moved to the rotation period, which is referred to as a Varimax rotation. The rotation does not affect the link between the Q-sorts, nor the consistency of each participant's perspective; it simply moves the viewpoints for who observes them. At the end, the researcher identifies factors, where each one will provide a group of views with strong links to each other and which are unlinked with other factors (Van Exel & de Graaf, 2005). These factors - the factor array - comprise the mean group of factors for any Q-study. The least factor is only one factor, and no more than seven or eight factors will emerge. For this study, just five factors emerged, as shown in Table 5 below.



**Table 5: Five Emergent Factors in this Study**

Theme	No.	Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Children's rights to a voice	CR1	I am unfamiliar with the concept of children's right to a voice.	-3	-1	-1	-4	-1
	CR2	I have a good understanding of the concept of children's right to a voice.	3	1	-1	0	1
	CR3	The same attention to ethics is needed when working with adults as with child research participants.	5	4	3	3	0
	CR4	Attention to research ethics is especially important when working with child participants.	3	5	3	5	-2

The PQMethod software gave me the results of the data as numbers for each factor but did not interpret these factors. *'The interpretative task in Q methodology involves the production of a series of summarizing accounts, each of which explicates the viewpoints being expressed by a particular factor'* (Stenner *et al.*, 2008, p. 227). The aim of this stage is centred on reading the factors seen to have emerged as words, not just numbers, which allows the reader to identify the similarities and differences in participants' perspectives (Corr, 2001). After this table was completed, crib sheets were developed to organise the items for each factor, from the highest to the lowest, and to draw a comparison between them (Wint, 2013). Excel Windows was used to develop the crib sheets. These were created manually (see Appendix 6) to help to determine the strong and weak themes for each factor, as well as overall.

#### **4.H Interviews with policymakers**

After analysing the data from the educational researchers, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the policymakers in order to collect data pertaining to their perceptions towards children participating in research from an ethical point of view. A semi-structured interview approach was adopted as this type of interview has many attributes; the most significant, however, is the flexibility and freedom of space afforded

to the interviewer to manipulate the questions as acceptable for the situation (Kellett, 2005). Policymakers from the NCC were interviewed in an effort to gauge their reactions and comments. The questions in the interview schedule were developed after the Q-analysis because the key aspect of these interviews was centred on sharing the results of the Q-sort for the set of voice profiles; however, some more general questions were suggested by the researcher.

#### ***4.H.1 Interview questions***

1. Level of education.
2. What is your occupation and what are your responsibilities?
3. Are you aware of studies involving children as participants in educational research?
4. Some researchers have involved children in their research. What do you see as the benefits and disadvantages of so doing? Why?
5. To what extent do you think researchers need to be aware of ethical issues when selecting children as participants in their research?
6. Do you have any particular ethical guidelines that you use? (*Further prompt:* What are the mechanisms between the National Committee for Childhood and the researchers regarding ethics for the researcher when having children participate in research?)
7. (*Show interviewees the voice profiles from the Q-studies.*) Can you comment on these? Does anything about the profiles surprise you?

#### ***4.H.2 Sampling frame***

Policymakers who are interested in children and childhood issues from the NCC were selected, as this institution is officially concerned with children within the KSA, as well as their representation on an international scale. These are decision-makers who can influence the policy and practice of educational research, and accordingly develop the implementation of children's rights. Interviews were conducted with three policymakers.

### **4.H.3 Data collection**

For this study, a very comfortable environment was created so that the stakeholders would be relaxed and would feel comfortable as participants. First of all, their permission to record whilst conducting the interview was requested; they were asked to sign the participant information sheet if they agreed. They then were reminded about the ethics conditions mentioned in the Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness section (Section 4.I Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness p.110). The interviews were held at their offices or by telephone, and at times of their choice; each took 30–40 minutes. After completion the interviews were transcribed in Arabic because it is the first language used in the KSA; these then were translated into English.

### **4.H.4 Recruiting interview participants**

The intention was to conduct interviews with three policymakers from the NCC. One was asked to recommend one more policymaker. I then contacted her via email to ask her about her availability to be interviewed; she agreed to undertake the interview face-to-face. The second one preferred to be interviewed by email because he could not invite me to his office as he was in the men's section and therefore I was not allowed to enter. It is worth mentioning that, in the KSA, there are two sections in the Ministry of Education; neither gender is allowed to go into the other's section. He was asked if he could be interviewed by phone but he preferred email and said: '*Send me the questions and I will answer them and send them to you. If you want any clarification of my answers reply to me.*' This was accepted. Before sending him the interview questions, Question 7 in the interview schedule was changed from:

*(Show interviewees the voice profiles from the Q-studies.) Can you comment on these? Does anything about the profiles surprise you?*

to:

There are some events for Saudi children which they have participated in, to express their views about things such as TED Kids at Riyadh, young scholarship movie, etc. Do you know about these events? If so, does the National Commission for Childhood sponsor these events? If not, why?

This change was implemented for two reasons: first, because, after meeting and talking with a journalist who is very interested in children's rights issues and children's voice, she advised of many events for children she has attended for the journal for which she works, but that the NCC had not mentioned them in the five-year report and does not sponsor them. The second reason was that policymakers may not understand the voice profiles until the interpretation was completed, and may not have time. Moreover, they were contacted and they had only one specific week to be involved in the interview because they would be travelling to conferences and the fieldwork trip would have been completed.

After making this change, the interview questions were sent to two participants, as requested, who were asked to look at the interview questions before the interview day. They then were asked to recommend a third policy-maker who might be willing to give an interview. They recommended a woman, but when she was contacted, she replied that she could not participate in the study because of her absence due to a health issue. However, during the interview with the one participant of the NCC, she suggested the name of a policymaker who works in the Ministry of Education. I contacted him to ask if he would agree to being interviewed. He agreed and said it could be arranged. He preferred to do the interview by telephone and asked that he be sent the interview questions beforehand. Thus, three policymakers were interviewed in three different ways for this study: two males (one by email and one by phone), and one female (face-to-face). Overall, the unwillingness of participants to conform to the requested protocol meant that the data collection method put more trust in the participant and it was impossible to know for sure what processes were actually followed. However, this meant the data collected in these circumstances, and the colleagues' comments about Q-sort, were believable when the conversation about the data was held with the participants. This made sense when reviewing their responses for the questionnaire.

#### ***4.H.5 Data analysis***

For this study, thematic analysis was used to analyse the data, which is justified as a '*method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (theme) within data*' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). This kind of analysis identifies the significant themes of the subject from different aspects and at different levels (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This method was chosen because it allowed the transcripts to be divided into themes in an

effort to explore participants' attitudes from their experience, which allowed further probing, additional flexibility and the ability to examine their knowledge (Cohen *at el.*, 2011). Moreover, as Braun and Clark (2006) mention, it is an appropriate method to explore participants' reality, meaning that stakeholders' perspectives towards the subject could be established.

#### **4.H.6 Thematic analysis process**

For this study, the guide of Braun and Clark (2006, p. 87) was followed in order to complete the analysis of the data through thematic methods, as shown in Table 5 below.

**Table 6: Phases of Thematic Analysis**

<b>The Procedure</b>	<b>Description</b>
1- Familiarising yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data noting down initial ideas.
2- Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3- Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4- Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2) generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5- Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story of the analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6- Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

After I followed Braun and Clark (2006) steps for the thematic analysis. I then summarised the responses of each of the participants for each questions. I decided to

present the findings in this way because with only 3 interviews presenting the responses “by question”, in my opinion, adds clarity for the reader. I then summarised the findings in bullet points for each of the interview questions. After that I compared the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis (Braun and Clark) with the Q-stat themes, (54 stat), in order to identify clearly the similar and different perspectives between the educational researchers and the policymakers in towards the ethics when participate children in research in KSA. Finally, a summary of the key findings from the policy-maker interviews were presented. While the presentation of the findings of the interview deviated from the traditional approach usually used with thematic analysis, my intention in so doing was to add clarity for the reader.

#### **4.1 Ethical considerations and trustworthiness**

This research presents the four ethical issues—autonomy, justice, non-maleficence and beneficence (O’Reilly *et al.*, 2013) discussed in the Literature Review sections (pp. 51-58). Participants were provided with a pack containing an information sheet and consent form, which needed to be signed by all participants. The pack was provided to female participants face-to-face before they started the process. Due to cultural consideration, the male participants were sent the pack via email; they replied in the same way. All information was provided in Arabic. The information sheet included the aim and objectives of the study, the measures to maintain confidentiality, and an explanation as to answering the questionnaire after completing the Q-sort as part of the Q-methodology process. The interview participants, who loaded the most strongly on each perspective from the Q-analysis and the policymaker interviewees, were also asked for permission to record their interviews, and were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any stage without needing to give a reason.

All participants were assured that their names would not be mentioned in the research, and that their anonymity would be maintained through the use of codes; and also that the researcher and her own supervisors would be the only individuals with the right to listen to the recordings (Kellett, 2005). However, because my supervisors do not use Arabic, they only would have had access to the translated transcriptions to the English language. After the research was completed, all recordings or written data would be stored securely in a locked drawer and accessible only to the supervisory team and

researcher for a period of five years following the last publication of the data, in accordance with the policy of the University of Manchester.

The data collection process, for all participants, was conducted in Arabic. The recordings were listened to more than once and then were transcribed into Arabic, and translated into English later on in the process. Using this two-stage process, the loss of multiple points of meaning through the translation process from one language to another was circumvented. Throughout all steps, best efforts were directed towards ensuring that the English transcripts were as close to the original Arabic text as possible. Regarding data translation, the assistance of a professional specialist bilingual translator was sought prior to beginning the data analysis. What is more, the participants were asked to check their answers after data analysis and to provide any comments or clarification as necessary.

Regarding trustworthiness, follow-up interviews with some participants and with policymakers helped with the situating of the findings and improved the overall trustworthiness of the Q-data analysis. Moreover, the pilot studies were helpful in improving the face-validity of the statements. The Q-sort has a theoretical basis for its design (O Reilly *at el.*, 2013) and furthermore the methodology can be replicated by other researchers. In addition, the study can be implemented with other educational researchers in other universities in other cities. Following the completion of the study, reports will be given to the Dean of the Education College at each university, the MOE and the NCC. Several aims have been outlined in providing these reports to the various organisations, the most important being to increase awareness regarding the issue of children's rights in the KSA and also to inform policymakers. By presenting the reflections of this research, it is hoped that confidence in the researcher will be established and increased, and that further works carried out by the same individual would be a viable possibility.

#### **4.J Strengths and limitations**

The strengths and limitations of this study are all about the methodology period; some of them before data collection, others during the fieldwork process, and some in the analysis and data sections.

The strengths focus on the suitable points for the method. The Q-methodology helped with the exploration of participants' viewpoints for a new topic—ethics when children participate in research—in a different way. This method is considered well-organised and follows clear steps, as one participant in the pilot study commented: *'Although I do not have any idea about the topic, I can share my perspective from reading the statements and sorting them'*. What is more, many participants commented on the methodology, stating that the results cannot be generalised because of the low participant numbers. The answer is in the point of Q-methodology, which is to identify people's viewpoints rather than how many people hold this viewpoint. Furthermore, this method shows all the voices of the participants, and does not ignore any voice, as has been illustrated throughout the course of the analysis process, by presenting the results in factors. Furthermore, in the Q-sorting process, providing a questionnaire for participants after their Q-sort helped in the collection of data in a more time-efficient and simpler way than would have been possible through interviewing. What is more, this method was effective in this case because most of participants preferred to perform the Q-sort in the researcher's absence.

The main difficulty, prior to collecting data, centred on developing the Q-set; this took a long time, notably around six months, because I was unable to find a suitable theoretical framework or theory related to the topic, meaning there was a need to create a new one (as mentioned in section *4.F.1 Developing a Comprehensive Set of Statements (Q-set)* p.80). For the fieldwork process, finding participants for the Q-methodology was the most significant obstacle. A limitation of this study is that no male educational researchers responded to the request to participate in the research, meaning the focus was on towards females only. Moreover, of the female educational researchers who agreed to participate, the majority preferred to complete the Q-sort without the researcher present, their reasons being that this method was new to them, new in KSA, and they needed time to do it. Furthermore, they indicated that they did not have time to learn a new skill by recognising Q-methodology as a method; some of them stated they had busy teaching schedules. However, after collecting the required number of participations, the decision was made to explore why the majority preferred not to sort the Q-set face-to-face; thus short informal interviews were carried out with four participants to establish their reasons. Their answers were similar, generally indicating that *'the instrument needs to be focused on'*; however, their justifications varied,



including the number of statements and their similarity, guaranteeing uninterrupted time commitment, preferring to do it at home after understanding the procedure, and being away from any distractions that could affect sorting and lead to confusion. On the other hand, finding policymakers to partake in interviews was easier, but the struggle was in finding a good way to record the interviews with the males. As mentioned (in section *4.H.4 Recruiting Interview Participants. p.107*), there were three policymakers: two males and one female. The female was contacted face-to-face; one male was interviewed by phone and the second was interviewed via email. In actual fact, the interview by email did not provide much information, as answers to the questions were limited.

Q-methodology is a new and unfamiliar tool in the KSA, meaning that there was a need to simplify the statements in order for them to be clear for the participants and to ensure the same meaning when translated into Arabic. However, by piloting the statements more than once, the validity of the Q-set was increased, thus it can be used with confidence in future research projects. However, a limitation was the number of the statements (54) in the Q-sort; it took a long time for participants to sort these, with some losing interest.

What is more, after analysing the questionnaires, it was found that some of the responses in Step 4 of the Q-sort steps (see Appendix 4-(b) The questionnaire after the participants have completed their Q-sorting) were incomplete; however, the researcher was able to depend on the answers of those who did respond to explore their perspectives towards Q-methodology as a method, the Q-set, and the Q-methodology process. Their answers were valuable and would help future researchers to keep in mind these problems and accordingly avoid them. For example, the participants focused on the number of statements as being too many; therefore, the decision was made to decrease them. The process took a long time, meaning it would be better to be undertaken online; some statements were unclear or seemed to lack value and so they had to be paraphrased (for details of all questions see Appendix 5 Feedback from the Q-Participants after the Q-Sorting Process). Also, Question 6: Could you tell me your overall thoughts and experiences of the Q-sort activity? was unclear for some participants. For the researcher in English it was clear, but upon being translated into Arabic, it was unclear for some participants. As a result, their answer was, '*This is the*

*first time I have used this method*'. They understood the questions as being about their previous experience and not about the present experience.

#### **4.K Summary**

This chapter has provided an overview of the instruments used for this study—the main instrument being Q-methodology—which has been explained, along with the reasons underpinning its selection. It then described, in detail, the process of implementing Q-methodology in the study. The procedures and implementation of the second instrument, the interview method, were presented alongside the difficulties encountered. The stages of analysis for both instruments were discussed, and the ethical considerations and issues pertaining to trustworthiness were identified and justified. The strengths and limitations of the study comprised the final part of this chapter. The next chapter provides a full explanation of the analysis process for both methods, Q-methodology and interview, and the results that have been found from this study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

#### **5. A Introduction**

This chapter illustrates the process of the analysis and interpretation of the data collected, as described in the Methodology chapter. The analysis process for Q-methodology is different to that of other methods; it takes each participant's perspective and compares it with all other participants' Q-sort results. This process was conducted using PQMethod software, also discussed in the Methodology chapter (Chapter 4 section 4.G Data Analysis p.101). The software shows the results as eight factors, which then were reduced to the best solution for this study's data, i.e. five factors. Five factors means that the participants were divided into five respective groups, where each factor encompasses all participants who were found to have similar perspectives towards the statements. What is more, it shows the high-loading participants for each factor, which proved very valuable in the interpretation stage. During that stage, the demographic information was linked with the factor array result to show the summary of participants' perspectives, which then was combined with participants' comments from their Q-sort. Moreover, a summary for each factor is presented at the beginning of the factor. Along the same lines, the policymakers' interviews were analysed using thematic analysis; their answers were then linked with the Q-statements in an effort to highlight the relationship between their answers and the educational researchers' perspectives. Finally, a summary is presented for the results linked with the factors' findings and the chapter is concluded by a summary.

#### **5.B The software**

Different statistical programs can be used for the analysis of Q-sort data, however in the current study, PQMethod software was used for the analysis due to it being free of charge and easy to use.

#### **5.C Data entry**

One of the advantages of the PQMethod software is that it allows easy and simple entry of data (Q-sorts) by the way they are collected, i.e. as 'piles' of statement numbers. The data entry process begins with the identification of the number of statements, values of the leftmost (Mostly disagree -5) and rightmost (Mostly agree +5) columns of the Q-

sort, with the number of rows in each column, then each of the Q-sorts for the 52 participants were entered into the program.

## **5.D Factor extraction**

### ***5.D.1 Why centroid factor analysis?***

The first step following data entry is that the PQMethod software computes intercorrelations amongst Q-sorts to demonstrate the relationship between each individual Q-sort with every other Q-sort, which then are factor-analysed, producing ‘factor’ groups of participants who have given a similar account, and therefore can be seen to share a specific viewpoint. However, prior to extracting factors, a decision has to be made to choose between two methods offered by the software to factor-analyse intercalations amongst Q-sorts using either the Centroid (preferred Q-Methodology) or Principal Component method.

For this study the Centroid method was used to extract 8 factors (the maximum number of factors that can be extracted by the program) based on the flexibility offered by the Centroid method. This allows for factors to be rotated (unlike the Principal Component method), which enables the exploration of and familiarisation with the data until a solution can be decided upon, which is not only good mathematically but which also can be seen as a ‘richer’ or more informative account by the researcher.

### ***5.D.2 Why were eight factors extracted?***

As Watts and Stenner (2012) mention, when there are more than 36 participants, the 7 factor solution is a starting point, which is the maximum number that the PQMethod will allow to emerge; in this study, however, the software provided 8 factors to extract as this study had 52 participants.

### ***5.D.3 What were the findings?***

The PQMethod formed 8 un-rotated factors at the beginning, as shown in Table 6.

**Table 7: Extracted Eight Un-rotated Factors Using Centroid Factor Analysis**

Q-sort Id	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
1	0.6561	-0.0054	-0.1316	0.0134	0.1670	0.1022	0.0129	0.6561
2	0.8120	-0.0640	0.1259	0.0040	-0.1273	-0.0711	0.0178	0.8120
3	0.7266	0.1078	0.0313	0.0083	-0.2975	0.0525	0.0548	0.7266
4	0.6569	0.0732	0.1042	0.0064	-0.0692	-0.3423	0.0891	0.6569
5	0.6118	0.2653	-0.1057	0.0535	-0.1278	-0.1782	0.0385	0.6118
6	0.1725	-0.1105	-0.1849	0.0273	0.3111	-0.1159	0.0623	0.1725
7	0.3941	-0.5167	-0.1969	0.1588	-0.0896	-0.0649	0.0120	0.3941
8	0.3634	0.1693	-0.1977	0.0469	0.0399	-0.2678	0.0543	0.3634
9	0.7687	0.2462	0.0562	0.0377	0.3626	0.2511	0.0917	0.7687
10	0.6393	0.3506	0.2046	0.0889	-0.0099	-0.0128	0.0010	0.6393
11	0.6201	0.0716	-0.0149	0.0052	0.2868	0.0909	0.0406	0.6201
12	0.5853	-0.3592	-0.3347	0.1319	0.0491	-0.0167	0.0015	0.5853
13	0.7020	-0.0848	-0.0331	0.0031	-0.1948	-0.2369	0.0696	0.7020
14	0.7271	0.2460	0.1057	0.0399	0.3358	0.2900	0.0915	0.7271
15	0.2984	-0.1808	0.4682	0.1106	0.2767	-0.2342	0.0818	0.2984
16	0.2517	-0.1360	0.2302	0.0241	-0.1057	-0.0326	0.0104	0.2517
17	0.7214	0.1331	0.0979	0.0140	0.1394	-0.1325	0.0245	0.7214
18	0.6862	-0.1205	-0.1120	0.0145	0.1464	0.1128	0.0105	0.6862
19	0.5420	-0.2444	-0.0575	0.0273	-0.0716	0.1467	0.0088	0.5420
20	0.7718	0.2179	0.0554	0.0301	0.3502	0.2331	0.0824	0.7718
21	0.5216	0.0620	-0.2573	0.0472	-0.0741	0.0461	0.0033	0.5216
22	0.4548	-0.4416	0.0679	0.0895	0.0636	0.1347	0.0044	0.4548
23	0.4943	0.0281	0.1073	0.0030	0.0252	-0.2089	0.0348	0.4943
24	0.8182	0.0472	0.1826	0.0130	-0.0146	-0.1757	0.0264	0.8182
25	0.2015	0.1218	-0.1327	0.0247	0.0129	-0.1615	0.0224	0.2015
26	0.2205	-0.2124	0.3361	0.0633	0.1364	-0.1832	0.0358	0.2205
27	0.7575	0.0604	0.1891	0.0149	-0.2868	-0.0886	0.0613	0.7575
28	0.5817	-0.0682	-0.1451	0.0164	0.0378	-0.1234	0.0147	0.5817
29	0.7375	0.1348	0.0733	0.0131	0.1196	-0.1250	0.0206	0.7375
30	0.6720	-0.1631	0.2818	0.0393	-0.1639	0.1615	0.0246	0.6720
31	0.3107	-0.5346	0.1403	0.1437	0.2096	0.1013	0.0212	0.3107
32	0.7311	-0.2822	0.0505	0.0323	-0.0370	0.1029	0.0022	0.7311
33	0.7728	0.2075	0.0640	0.0277	0.3263	0.2464	0.0764	0.7728
34	0.5547	0.0238	-0.3822	0.0923	-0.0227	-0.2194	0.0388	0.5547
35	0.5311	0.0020	0.1709	0.0085	-0.2184	0.1241	0.0334	0.5311

36	0.4845	0.1335	-0.0909	0.0202	0.2964	0.2076	0.0578	0.4845
37	0.6943	0.2883	0.1219	0.0543	-0.0578	0.1198	0.0049	0.6943
38	0.5903	0.0194	-0.2579	0.0444	0.1496	0.0552	0.0084	0.5903
39	0.7500	0.0210	-0.0100	0.0014	0.3054	-0.2033	0.0814	0.7500
40	0.5460	0.0207	-0.0472	0.0035	-0.1634	0.1941	0.0294	0.5460
41	0.7705	-0.1017	-0.1039	0.0118	-0.0376	0.1233	0.0038	0.7705
42	0.7326	0.2412	0.0888	0.0374	-0.2617	0.0708	0.0429	0.7326
43	0.2498	0.0814	-0.2708	0.0536	-0.2024	0.2159	0.0423	0.2498
44	0.5495	-0.1047	-0.4371	0.1217	-0.1510	-0.1228	0.0303	0.5495
45	0.6438	-0.1036	0.1965	0.0149	-0.1401	-0.0917	0.0229	0.6438
46	0.7864	0.2642	0.0776	0.0438	-0.1852	-0.1741	0.0489	0.7864
47	0.7957	-0.1098	0.1991	0.0161	-0.1066	0.0508	0.0072	0.7957
48	0.5114	0.1235	0.0383	0.0104	-0.0281	-0.0940	0.0106	0.5114
49	0.7298	0.0397	0.0827	0.0024	-0.2083	0.1010	0.0289	0.7298
50	0.5972	0.0585	-0.0217	0.0043	-0.3581	0.1494	0.0859	0.5972
51	0.6879	-0.0958	-0.3079	0.0627	-0.1359	0.2006	0.0254	0.6879
52	0.7861	0.1252	-0.0422	0.0141	-0.1656	0.0824	0.0181	0.7861
<b>Eigen-values</b>	<b>20.0579</b>	<b>2.02511</b>	<b>1.79249</b>	<b>0.15405</b>	<b>1.8882</b>	<b>1.34597</b>	<b>0.10291</b>	<b>1.28143</b>
<b>% Explained Variance</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

Table 7 represents the output of the PQMethod software extraction of 8 factors using the Centroid method. The table shows the factors extracted and the un-rotated ‘loading’ (that is, correlation) of each Q-sort with that factor, along with the eigenvalues and explained variance by each factor. Further, it can be seen from the last row of Table 7 that the explained variance by factors 4 and 7 (which refer to the proportion of the meaning and variability in a Q-sort) is zero, as more information can be gleaned by considering the individual items concerned. Moreover, including such factors in the next step of the analysis would have been pointless as they do not add more valuable information to the solution.

## 5.E Factor rotation

Following the completion of the factor extraction, the next stage in the process was factor rotation. The aim of rotated factors is to ‘*get the viewpoint of the various factor suitably focused in relation to the data we have collected*’ (Watts & Stenner, 2012, pp. 118–119). Van Exel and de Graaf (2005, p. 9) explain the rotation as follows:

*Rotation does not affect the consistency in sentiment throughout individual Q sort or the relationships between Q sorts, it only shifts the perspective from which they are observed. Each resulting final factor represents a group of individual points of view that are highly correlated with each other and uncorrelated with others.*

This step is needed in order to make interpretation of the factor easier. The PQMethod software offers two techniques of factor rotation: a hand rotation technique, which is considered manual, or computer use, which is known as the Varimax rotation technique. Manual rotation is considered a theoretical rotation, whilst Varimax is considered an automatic factor rotation technique, which reveals only the most mathematically informative solution. Varimax rotation was chosen for this study as it is appropriate when dealing with large data sets, as in this study. It provides a simple solution based on statistics, and reduces the possibility that the researcher would impose any subjectivity onto the results (Wint, 2013).

Using the PQMethod software to make a decision about how many factors should be considered for the best solution, Watts and Stenner (2005) suggest that there are two standard requirements for the extracted factor to be selected:

1. The factor with an eigenvalue in excess of 1.00 since factors below this minimum will ultimately serve no data-reductive purpose as they explain less of the overall study variance than any individual Q-sort item does. It can be clearly seen that Factors 4 and 7 (see Table 7) have eigenvalues equating to less than 1.
2. The factor ordinarily must have at least two Q-sorts that load significantly upon it alone.

Such significantly loading Q-sorts are called ‘factor exemplars’ as they exemplify the shared item pattern or configuration that is characteristic of that specific factor.

The calculation to determine the significance of a Q-sort is as follows:

$$= 2.58 \times (1 \div \sqrt{\text{no. of items in Q-set}})$$

$$= 2.58 \times (1 \div \sqrt{54})$$

$$= 2.58 \times (1 \div 7.3485)$$

$$= 2.58 \times 0.1361$$

$$= 0.3511 \text{ rounded to } \pm 0.35.$$

The resulting calculation was  $\pm 0.35$  at the 0.01 significance level, but it was chosen at  $\pm 0.45$  as a critical significance value to allow for the highest number of participants to load significantly onto one of the factors (Wint, 2013). Six participants (numbers 4, 13, 32, 37, 39 and 46) were confounded, i.e. they loaded significantly on more than one factor at the critical value of 0.45. Furthermore, nine participants (numbers 6, 16, 21, 23, 25, 28, 38, 43 and 48) were idiosyncratic as they did not load significantly onto any of the factors.

Table 8 below represents the output of the PQMethod software of rotating the six factors using the Varimax technique. The rotation process produced just a five-factor solution, satisfied the requirement of eigenvalues to be greater than 1.00, and has at least two participants significantly loading on each factor, in addition to explaining 52% of the total study variance.

**Table 8: Five Factor Solution Following Varimax Rotation at  $\pm 0.45$  Critical Value of Significance**

Q-sort Id	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Notes
1	0.2632	0.3207	0.0023	0.4901	0.2681	
2	0.6222	0.3067	0.1962	0.2849	0.3103	
3	0.6821	0.1803	-0.0560	0.2415	0.2695	
4	0.4628	0.1000	0.2727	0.1676	0.4905	<b>Confounded Q-Sort</b>
5	0.4367	0.0271	-0.0374	0.2410	0.5044	<i>Second-highest loading on Factor 5</i>
6	-0.1960	0.2124	0.0954	0.2012	0.2276	<b>No significant loading</b>
7	0.1473	0.6598	0.0718	-0.0600	0.1789	<i>Highest loading on Factor 2</i>
8	0.1131	0.0311	-0.0005	0.1491	0.4892	
9	0.3263	0.1249	0.0809	0.8271	0.1936	<i>Highest loading on Factor 4</i>



10	0.5234	-0.1015	0.1323	0.4360	0.2789	
11	0.2152	0.2036	0.1086	0.5712	0.2298	
12	0.1520	<b>0.6543</b>	-0.0242	0.2023	0.3332	<i>Second-highest loading on Factor 2</i>
13	<b>0.5144</b>	0.3073	0.1283	0.1021	<b>0.4517</b>	<b>Confounded Q-Sort</b>
14	0.3411	0.0986	0.0830	<b>0.8057</b>	0.1238	<i>Second-highest loading on Factor 4</i>
15	0.1236	0.0955	<b>0.6534</b>	0.1722	0.0441	<i>Highest loading on Factor 3</i>
16	0.2908	0.1283	0.2152	0.0030	-0.0176	<b>No significant loading</b>
17	0.3976	0.1165	0.2366	0.4497	0.3923	
18	0.2892	0.4224	0.0415	0.4586	0.2327	
19	0.3497	0.4546	0.0030	0.2162	0.0830	
20	0.3306	0.1453	0.0923	0.8033	0.1998	
21	0.2894	0.2475	-0.1852	0.2598	0.3240	<b>No significant loading</b>
22	0.2232	0.5550	0.2032	0.1880	-0.0461	
23	0.3112	0.0971	0.2394	0.1893	0.3157	<b>No significant loading</b>
24	0.5746	0.1856	0.2979	0.3524	0.3958	
25	0.0621	-0.0007	-0.0226	0.0800	0.2985	<b>No significant loading</b>
26	0.1217	0.1327	<b>0.4768</b>	0.0522	0.0200	<i>Second-highest loading on Factor 3</i>
27	<b>0.7299</b>	0.1575	0.1477	0.1871	0.2983	<i>Highest loading on Factor 1</i>
28	0.2598	0.3107	0.0619	0.2462	0.3859	<b>No significant loading</b>
29	0.4126	0.1300	0.2093	0.4490	0.4049	
30	0.6315	0.3258	0.1988	0.2598	-0.0148	
31	0.0453	0.5605	0.3409	0.1625	-0.1312	
32	<b>0.4755</b>	<b>0.5165</b>	0.1497	0.3052	0.1343	<b>Confounded Q-Sort</b>
33	0.3505	0.1526	0.0862	0.7908	0.1827	
34	0.1889	0.3005	-0.1093	0.1779	<b>0.5847</b>	<i>Highest loading on Factor 5</i>
35	0.5556	0.1599	0.0472	0.1896	0.0448	
36	0.1170	0.1477	-0.0321	0.5791	0.1424	
37	<b>0.5682</b>	0.0125	0.0134	<b>0.4712</b>	0.2241	<b>Confounded Q-Sort</b>
38	0.1813	0.3150	-0.0853	0.4306	0.3428	<b>No significant loading</b>
39	0.2432	0.2463	0.2907	<b>0.5029</b>	<b>0.4818</b>	<b>Confounded Q-Sort</b>
40	0.4580	0.2345	-0.1269	0.2686	0.1100	

41	0.4696	0.4333	-0.0221	0.3936	0.2549	
42	<b>0.7022</b>	0.0618	-0.0462	0.3208	0.2703	<b>Second-highest loading on Factor 1</b>
43	0.2215	0.1577	-0.3629	0.1177	0.0949	<b>No significant loading</b>
44	0.2427	0.4410	-0.2030	0.0909	0.5026	
45	0.5436	0.2503	0.2441	0.1677	0.2116	
46	0.6537	0.0309	0.0920	0.2970	0.4847	<b>Confounded Q-Sort</b>
47	0.6346	0.3360	0.2109	0.3292	0.1704	
48	0.3571	0.0661	0.0892	0.2457	0.2961	<b>No significant loading</b>
49	0.6425	0.2294	0.0112	0.3005	0.1961	
50	0.6266	0.2028	-0.1649	0.1614	0.1548	
51	0.4129	0.4844	-0.2502	0.3208	0.2631	
52	0.6108	0.2219	-0.0712	0.3765	0.3171	
<b>Total Number of Participants</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>= 37 Loading Participant + 6 Confounded Q-Sort* + 9 No significant loading**</b>
<b>% Explained Variance</b>	<b>18 %</b>	<b>8 %</b>	<b>4 %</b>	<b>13 %</b>	<b>9 %</b>	<b>52 %</b>
<b>Eigenvalues</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	

\* *Confounded Q-Sort: loaded significantly on more than one factor at the critical value of  $\pm 0.45$ .*

\*\* *did not load significantly onto any of the factors.*

**Table 9: The Two Participants who Loaded Most Strongly onto Each of the Identified Factors**

	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Factor 3</b>	<b>Factor 4</b>	<b>Factor 5</b>
<b>Highest loading Participant on the factor</b>	<b>Q-Sort (27)</b>	<b>Q-Sort (7)</b>	<b>Q-Sort (15)</b>	<b>Q-Sort (9)</b>	<b>Q-Sort (34)</b>
<b>Second-highest loading Participant on the factor</b>	<b>Q-Sort (42)</b>	<b>Q-Sort (12)</b>	<b>Q-Sort (26)</b>	<b>Q-Sort (14)</b>	<b>Q-Sort (5)</b>

These results are extracted directly from Table 3, and show the participants who loaded most strongly on the factors (i.e. the participants who were interviewed).

## **5.F Factor arrays**

*‘A factor array is, in fact, no more or less than a single Q sort configured to represent the viewpoint of a particular factor’* (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 140). This step is considered the first of the factor interpretation in Q-Analysis and creates the factor array, which represents exemplars (all of the Q-sorts that are not confounded or non-significant). The PQMethod software automatically generates the factor arrays. Each of the factor arrays for the five factors is outlined in Table 10 below.

**Table 10: Factor Arrays for Each of the Five Factors**

Themes	Stat- number	Statement	Factor number				
			1	2	3	4	5
Children's right to a voice	ch1	I am unfamiliar with the concept of children's right to a voice.	-3	-1	-1	-4	-1
	ch2	I have a good understanding of the concept of children's right to a voice.	3	1	-1	0	1
	ch3	The same attention to ethics is needed when working with adults as with child research participants.	5	4	3	3	0
	ch4	Attention to research ethics is especially important when working with child participants.	3	5	3	5	-2
	ch5	My main reason for including child participants in research would be because they are a useful source of data.	-1	1	-5	0	3
	ch6	It is my duty as an educational researcher to include children in research.	0	0	-3	0	0
	ch7	I would include children in research because it would benefit my career.	0	-2	0	0	-1
	ch8	I would include children as participants in research to allow their voice to be heard.	1	0	-3	1	3
	ch9	I believe that only children can represent themselves.	2	2	-5	1	4
	ch10	I believe that adults can represent children's viewpoints.	-2	-5	1	-4	-5

	ch11	Including children as research participants allows their viewpoints to be heard.	1	3	3	1	1
	ch12	If I include children as participants in my research, it will be my researcher supervisor's decision.	-1	-3	-1	1	-3
	ch13	If you want to understand educational experience, children are the people to ask.	0	-1	-3	-2	-1
	ch14	The opinions of educational experts are more valuable than children's views because children are too young to have useful ideas and suggestions.	-2	-4	0	0	-2
<b>Ethical policy</b>	ethics15	Some Saudi children might find it difficult to refuse to participate in research if asked by an adult.	0	-1	1	1	-1
	ethics16	Most Saudi children have the confidence to decline to take part in research.	-1	-2	-3	-1	0
	ethics17	Asking participants to sign Western-style consent forms could seem strange/inappropriate for participants in the Saudi context.	-1	-1	0	-2	-1
	ethics18	Procedures for taking consent as required at Western Universities would be useful for raising awareness about research ethics in the KSA.	1	3	1	2	0
	ethics19	Universities have the responsibility to provide training courses in research ethics.	3	4	-1	4	2
	ethics20	Special training courses on ethics for researchers is unnecessary in KSA.	-3	-4	-1	-2	-4
	ethics21	My institution has their own ethical form to use with participants in research.	-1	-2	0	-2	-2

	ethics22	It's my duty to create my own ethical form to use with participants in research.	-1	1	0	1	-2
	ethics23	Ethics forms and procedures are designed to only protect and ensure the respect of the participants.	-2	-4	-2	-1	-2
	ethics24	Ethics forms and procedures are designed to protect and ensure the respect of researchers.	-3	-3	-1	-3	-3
	ethics25	As an educational researcher I believe that having ethics forms and procedures helps me when planning my fieldwork.	2	2	2	4	1
	ethics26	Completing ethics forms and procedures for my research takes a long time.	0	-2	0	3	0
	ethics27	It should be compulsory to follow ethical guidelines when conducting research with children.	5	5	2	4	4
	ethics28	Following ethical guidelines when conducting research with children should be optional.	-5	0	-3	-3	-4
<b>Respect for Autonomy</b>	autonomy29	It is essential that child participants are given regular reminders that they can withdraw from the research if they feel uncomfortable or upset.	1	0	0	-1	1
	autonomy30	Once the child and their parents have consented to taking part, it is important that they are encouraged to complete the study.	0	3	-4	0	0
	autonomy31	Children lack real understanding about what it means to decide upon participating in research.	-2	2	1	-4	0

	autonomy32	It is the child's right to get detailed explanation about research steps in order to decide upon their participation.	4	0	2	2	-1
	autonomy33	It is the child's right to be given enough time to decide whether to participate or not.	3	-1	4	2	2
	autonomy34	Giving children time to decide whether or not to participate in research is unnecessary.	-5	-2	-1	-5	-3
	autonomy35	I believe obtaining parents' permission for their child's participation is enough, without asking the child.	-4	0	1	-5	-4
	autonomy36	In my view the researcher should obtain consent from both the parents and the child to include a child in research.	4	2	2	5	4
	autonomy37	Informing children about the nature of the research is vital because it helps them to decide about their participation.	4	-1	1	2	2
	autonomy38	Informing children about the research plan is pointless because they are too young to understand.	-4	0	-2	-1	1
<b>Justice</b>	Justice 39	Researchers should try to capture the experiences of as wide a range of children as possible in research (e.g. in terms of ability, ethnicity, age, etc.).	1	2	-2	2	1
	Justice 40	For practical reasons, the perspectives of some groups of children will tend to be more prominent in research than others.	0	1	-2	-2	3
	Justice 41	The researchers should capture the voices of children of both genders (boys & girls) in their research.	2	3	3	-1	5

	Justice 42	As a researcher I prefer to include only one gender (girls or boys) in my research because it's easier.	-2	-5	-4	-3	-5
	Justice 43	As an educational researcher I have to ensure that all children are enjoying their participation in research.	2	1	0	0	3
	Justice 44	The researcher's aim is to collect data from all children in their study regardless of whether or not they are enjoying their participation.	-3	-3	4	-1	-2
<b>Beneficence</b>	Beneficence45	It is the children's right to know about the research outcome.	2	-2	-4	1	1
	Beneficence46	It is unnecessary to share the findings of the research with children.	-2	-1	-3	0	0
	Beneficence47	The researcher could give children an incentive to participate, beforehand.	0	0	0	0	0
	Beneficence48	The researcher has to give children an incentive after the research to thank them for their participation.	0	1	2	-3	2
<b>Non-maleficence</b>	Non-M49	The researcher has to respect children's wishes about revealing their identity.	1	1	1	-1	2
	Non-M50	The researcher has to be sensitive to when it might be necessary to reveal a child participant's identity to a third party.	1	0	4	3	5
	Non-M51	The researcher only has to inform the parents, not the child, about potential risks that their child might face while participating in the research.	-4	4	2	-2	0
	Non-M52	The researcher has to inform both the parents and children about potential risks to help them decide whether or not to take part.	2	0	5	2	-1



	Non-M53	In research it is the children's right to withhold their answers from their parents.	-1	-3	0	3	2
	Non-M54	Parents have a right to see the responses of their children in research studies because their child is under age.	0	2	5	0	-3

## 5.G Interpreting factor arrays

For this part, Wint’s (2013) study style was followed, albeit with some minor changes made to match the current study. Wint's (2013) study was chosen because it is well-organised and very clear for the reader. The four steps mentioned below help to create clear details for each factor.

1. Distinguishing and consensus statements.
2. Demographic information for participants.
3. The crib sheet for each factor.
4. Qualitative information, comments from the participants’ interviews, and after-sort questionnaire.

### 5 G.1 Distinguishing and consensus statements

Exploring the distinguishing and consensus statements show how the factors can be compared. The two tables below show the consensus and distinguishing statements across the five factors.

**Table 11: Distinguishing Statements**

Factor	Distinguishing Statement Number	Distinguishing Statement	Score
1	Autonomy 31	Children lack real understanding about what it means to decide upon participating in research.	-2
	Justice 42	As a researcher, I prefer to include only one gender (girls or boys) in my research because it’s easier.	-2
	Non-M51	The researcher only has to inform the parents, not the child, about potential risks that their child might face while participating in the research.	-4
	CR 2	I have a good understanding of the concept of children’s right to a voice.	3
	Autonomy 38	Informing children about the research plan is pointless because they are too young to understand.	-4
	Non-M 50	The researcher has to be sensitive to when it might be necessary to reveal a child participant’s identity to a third party.	1
	Non-M 54	Parents have a right to see the responses of their children in research studies because their children are under age.	0

2	Autonomy 30	Once the child and their parents have consented to taking part, it is important that they are encouraged to complete the study.	3
	Autonomy 33	It is the child's right to be given enough time to decide whether to participate or not.	-1
	Non-M 53	In research it is the children's right to withhold their answers from their parents.	-3
	Non-M 54	Parents have a right to see the responses of their children in research studies because their children are under age.	2
	Ethics 23	Ethics forms and procedures are designed to only protect and ensure the respect of the participants.	-4
	Autonomy 37	Informing children about the nature of the research is vital because it helps them to decide about their participation.	-1
	Beneficence45	It is the children's right to know about the research outcome.	-2
	Non-M 50	The researcher has to be sensitive to when it might be necessary to reveal a child participant's identity to a third party.	0
3	CR5	My main reason for including children participants in research would be because they are a useful source of data.	-5
	CR9	I believe that only children can represent themselves.	-5
	CR10	I believe that adults can represent children's viewpoints.	1
	Autonomy30	Once the child and their parents have consented to taking part, it is important that they are encouraged to complete the study.	-4
	Justice39	Researchers should try to capture the experiences of as wide a range of children as possible (e.g. in terms of ability, gender, age, etc.).	-2
	Justice44	The researchers' aim is to collect data from all children in their study regardless of whether or not they are enjoying their participation.	4
	Beneficence45	It is the children's right to know about the research outcome.	-4
	Non-M52	The researcher has to inform children about potential risks to help them decide whether or not to take part.	5
	Non-M54	Parents have a right to see the responses of their children in research studies because their children are under age.	5
	CR6	It is my duty as an educational researcher to include children in research.	-3
	CR8	I would include children as participants in research to allow their voices to be heard.	-3

	Ethics19	Universities have the responsibility to provide training courses in research ethics.	-1
4	Ethics26	Completing ethics forms and procedures for my research takes a long time.	3
	Autonomy31	Children lack real understanding about what it means to decide upon participating in research.	-4
	Justice 41	The researchers should capture the voices of children of both genders (boys & girls) in their research.	-1
	Beneficence48	The researcher has to give children an incentive after the research to thank them for their participation.	-3
	Non-M 51	The researcher only has to inform the parents, not the child, about potential risks that their child might face while participating in the research.	-2
	Ethics 25	As an educational researcher I believe that having ethics forms and procedures help me when planning my fieldwork.	4
	Non- M54	Parents have a right to see the responses of their children in research studies because their children are under age.	0
5	CR3	The same attention to ethics is needed when working with adults as with child research participants.	0
	CR4	Attention to research ethics is especially important when working with child participants.	-2
	Non- M54	Parents have a right to see the responses of their children in research studies because their children are under age.	-3
	CR 8	I would include children as participants in research to allow their voices to be heard.	3
	Ethics19	Universities have the responsibility to provide training courses in research ethics.	2
	Justice 40	For practical reasons, the perspectives of some groups of children will tend to be more prominent in research than others.	3

\* Statements that are significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level are denoted in red.

Distinguishing statements are the statements that are placed on the factor array as significant ( $P < 0.01$  and  $p < 0.05$ ), and could be a group of themes that could explore extra information about the factors (Wint, 2013).

**Table 12: Consensus Statements**

Statement		Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Ethics17	Asking participants to sign Western-style consent forms could seem strange/inappropriate for Saudi participants.	-1	-1	0	-2	-1
Ethics21	My institution has their own ethical forms to use with participants in research.	-1	-2	0	-2	-2
Beneficence47	The researcher could give children an incentive to participate, beforehand.	0	0	0	0	0

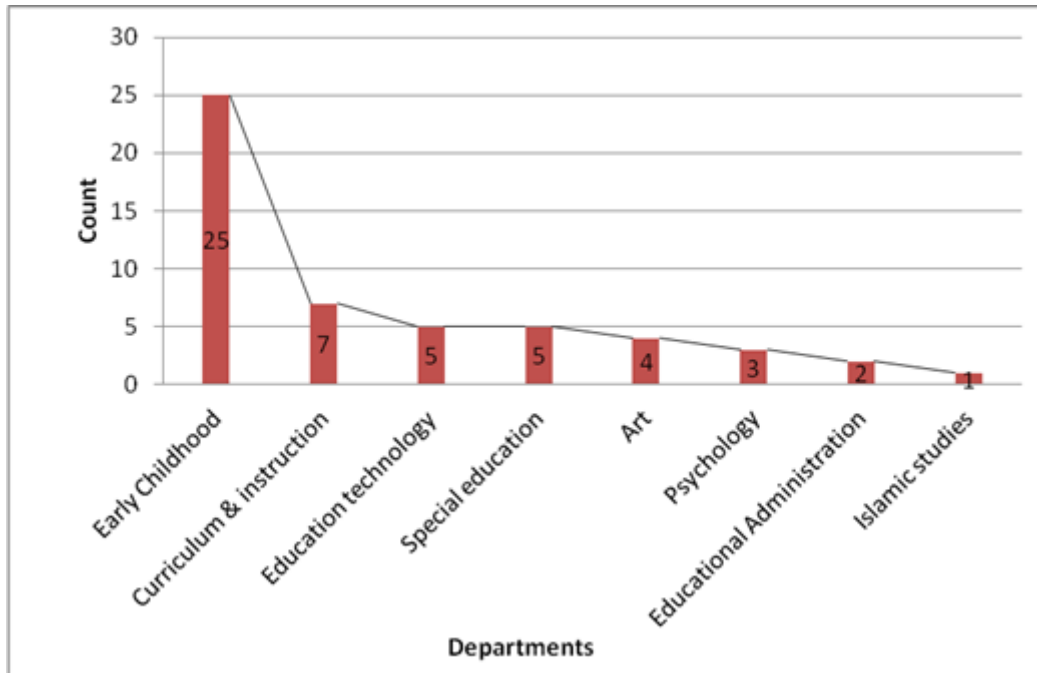
\* Statements that are non-significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level are denoted in red.

The consensus statements are the statements that all the factors agreed with. The last one in the table above shows that none of the participants' factors care about this statement ( see the interpretations in section 5.H, p. 137 )

### ***5.G.2 Demographic information***

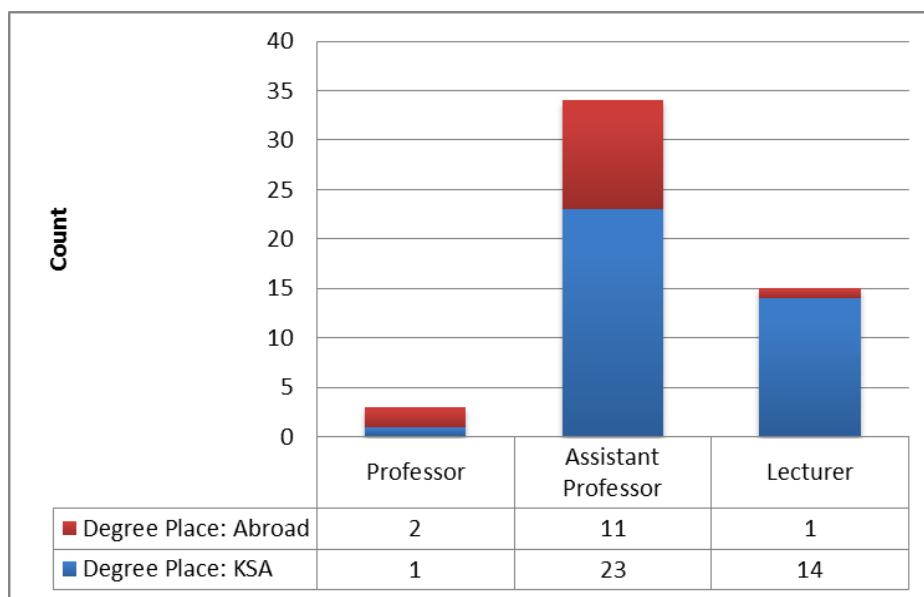
Collecting information about the participants helps the researcher to understand from where their perspectives have emerged, why they sorted the items in this way, and how their understanding of the issue can be explored (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Fifty-two (52) participants took part in this study, they were female educational researchers from two different universities within Riyadh city at KSA - 8 participants (15%) from PNU and 44 participants (85%) from KSU. They represent a range of different schools within the education departments of both universities. Here, the demographic information of the participants is explored according to the educational departments, their degree, degree place from which they gained their degree and their experience, and shows whether they have had children participate in their research and, if so, the frequency of that participation.

As mentioned in the Methodology chapter, KSU and PNU have education departments with the same functions but which are named differently. At KSU, the department is titled Education Policies and Kindergarten, while at PNU it is titled Early Childhood. In this thesis, the title early childhood school is used to refer to both universities' schools so as to ensure clarity for the reader.

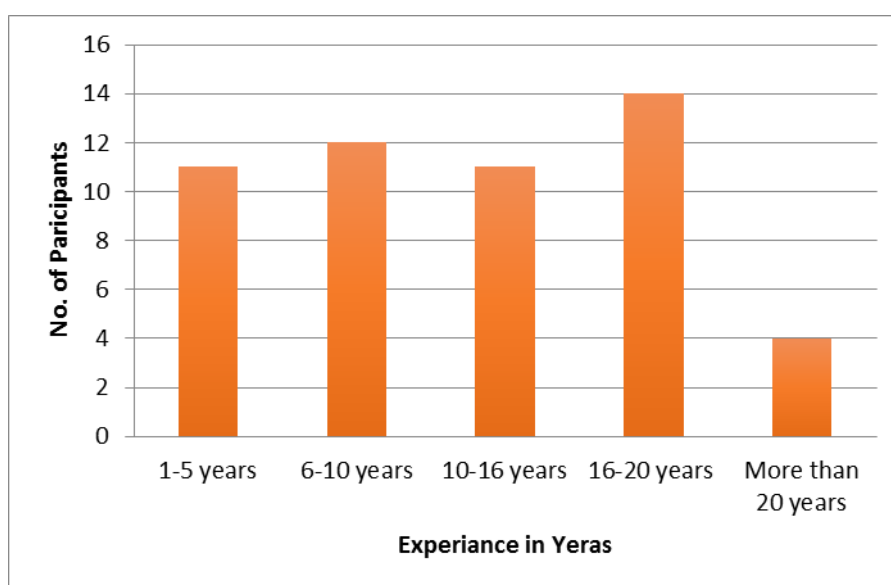


**Figure 6: Distribution of Participants Amongst the Education Departments**

Figure 6 shows that the majority of the participants are from the early childhood schools and only one from Islamic studies. The reason for this distribution has been mentioned in the Methodology chapter (Section 4.F.5 *Sampling Frame (P-set)* p. 96).

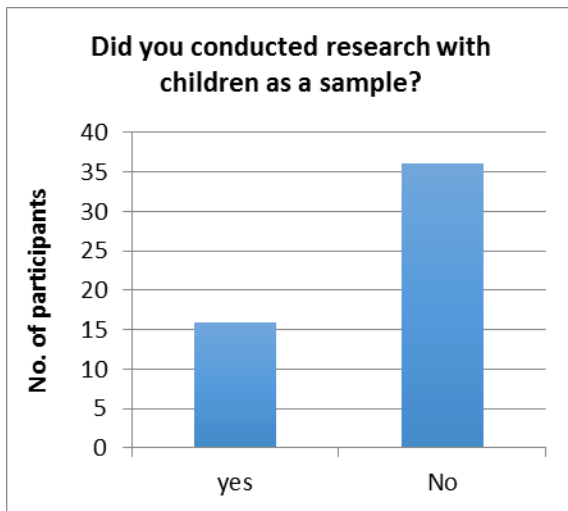


**Figure 7: Distribution of Participants According to Degree, and Degree Place**

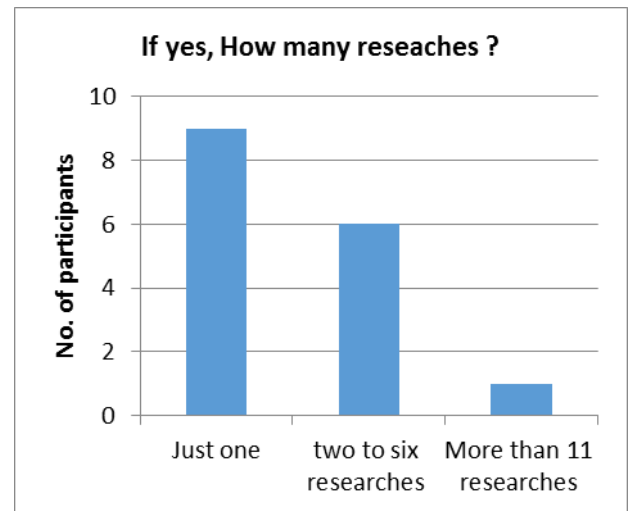


**Figure 8: Distribution of Participants According to Experience**

Figures 7 and 8 are related to each other. Figure 7 shows the degree level of the participants, most of whom are Assistant Professors (34), then lecturers (15), with only three professors. Also, most of them achieved their degrees within the KSA. Figure 8 shows participants' years of experience with 16–20 years being the most common; if this fact is linked with the place at which they obtained their degree, the KSA, we know that this is normal because, at that time, funding was very difficult and scholarships were limited.



**Fig. (9-a)**



**Fig. (9-b)**

**Figures 9-a and 9-b: Distribution of Participants According to Children’s Participation in their Research**

Figures 9-a and 9-b show an important aspect of the study's participants, which is their undertaking of research with children participating. When participants were asked if they had conducted research with children as a sample, and how many times they had done so, 36 had not done this whilst only 16 said yes. The majority had only done so once, whereas one participant had done so more than 11 times.

**5.G.3 The crib sheet for each factor**

The crib sheet for each factor was used to help the researcher to understand the factor arrays for each factor and accordingly organise the items into four categories: the highest items that ranked (+5); items ranked higher in each factor than in other factor arrays; items ranked lower in each factor than in other factor arrays; and the lowest items ranked (–5). Watts and Stenner (2012, p. 150) describe the crib sheet as follows:

*A security blanket; it is a way of ensuring that nothing obvious gets missed or overlooked. However, it also provides a wider system of organization for the interpretative process and encourages holism by forcing engagement with every item in a factor array.*

The crib sheet for each factor can be seen in Appendix 6.

**5.G.4 Qualitative information, comments from the participants’ interviews and after sorting the questionnaire**

The feedback from the participants’ questionnaires about their sorting helped in terms of understanding their attitudes. Question 1 of the questionnaire, ‘With which statements



*that you have chosen do you most agree and why?* and Question 2: *‘With which statements that you have chosen do you most disagree and why?’* explored perspectives towards the ethics of children’s participation in research. Moreover, the interviews performed with the highest loading participants for each factor ensured greater understanding of the issue and their perspectives. For this study only the most loading participant for each factor was interviewed in depth because the others were not available, and enough information was obtained for the interpretation. Participant 27 was interviewed for Factor 1; Participant 7 for Factor 2; Participant 15 for Factor 3; Participant 9 for Factor 4; and Participant 34 for Factor 5.

## **5.H Factor interpretations: quantitative summary and demographic information**

The analysis was performed using the PQMethod; five factors was found to be the best solution to this study, with five factors theoretically distinguishable. Moreover, Factor 4, Factor 3 and Factor 2 solutions were tried in line with these data and were found to show a high correlation; however, the decision then was made to maintain five factors because they represent very different perspectives for each factor. Subsequently, a summary for each factor is presented, with the factor interpretation shown in detail, with the demographic information.

### ***5.H.1 Factor 1: the knowledge about children’s right to express their voice***

For this factor, the participants considered that they are familiar with and have a good understanding of the concept of children’s right to a voice. They believed that researchers have to know that it is the child’s right to be given enough time to decide whether or not they would like to participate in research. Also, they considered that children have the right to participate in research and further believe that it is very important to inform children about the research plan, and that they be given detailed explanations about the nature of the research in order to decide upon their participation and an explanation of any potential risks that they might face, whilst participating in the research. Furthermore, the participants strongly agreed that research ethics, when dealing with children, are very important and should be compulsory. Further to this, they agreed to the idea of having ethics forms and procedures in the KSA because they see that it is necessary for researchers to have special training courses on ethics; they see that it is the universities’ responsibility to provide such courses. Furthermore, the

researcher should have to give the same attention to ethics when working with children in research, as given when working with adult participants, and should obtain consent from both parents and child to include a child in research.

**5.H.1(1) Demographic information**

**Table 13: Demographic Data for Factor 1**

N	University	School department	Current status	Degree place	Years of experience	Research frequency with children
2	PNU	Education Technology	Assistant Professor	KSA	11–15	–
3	PNU	Early Childhood	Assistant Professor	KSA	16–20	–
10	KSU	Educational Administration	Assistant Professor	KSA	16–20	–
24	KSU	Art	Assistant Professor	KSA	1–5	1
27**	KSU	Education Technology	Assistant Professor	Abroad-Egypt	16–20	1
30	KSU	Islamic Studies	Assistant Professor	KSA	11–15	–
35	KSU	Early Childhood	Assistant Professor	KSA	6–10	–
40	KSU	Early Childhood	Assistant Professor	KSA	6–10	–
41	KSU	Early Childhood	Assistant Professor	Abroad-USA	6–10	1
42*	KSU	Early Childhood	Lecturer	KSA	16–20	2–6
45	KSU	Early Childhood	Lecturer	KSA	11–15	1
47	KSU	Early Childhood	Lecturer	KSA	1–5	–
49	KSU	Early Childhood	Lecturer	KSA	6–10	–
50	KSU	Early Childhood	Lecturer	KSA	1–5	–
52	KSU	Early Childhood	Lecturer	KSA	6–10	–

\*\* Highest loading participant

\* Second-highest loading participant

**5.H.1(1A) Interpretation of the demographic data for Factor 1**

Factor 1 has an eigenvalue of 9.00 and explains 18% of the study variance (Table 7, p. 117). The total number of participants is 15, and they are significantly associated with

this factor. They are females, two from PNU and 13 from KSU in the education department in both universities, but from different schools. The majority, 10, are from the early childhood schools; two from Education Technology; one from Art; one from Islamic Studies and one from Education Administration. Also, nine are Assistant Professors whilst six are lecturers. Regarding their degrees, 13 achieved their degrees from the KSA and just two from abroad. In relation to their experience as educational researchers at their universities, three have between 1-5 years; five have between 6-10 years; three have between 11-15 years; and four have between 16-20 years. The majority of the participants, 10, have not had children participate in their research. What is more, just five have had children participate in research, of which four have included children in one research and just one participant, who has conducted 2–6 research studies, has had children participate in her research more frequently.

The participants of this factor have knowledge about the children's right to a voice concept. This might be because they are from KSU, one of the largest universities in the KSA and that has opened many opportunities for them to increase their knowledge by attending conferences, where, for example, they may meet different people with different thoughts and new knowledge. Also, they believed that this knowledge they hold could be because most of them are from the early childhood schools so they are interested in children's issues. Furthermore, the majority are Assistant Professors, which means that their level of education is high. However, although most are from KSU, from the early childhood school and half of them have long experience in their field, only a few have conducted research with children. Furthermore, their field does not encourage them to include children in their research although the majority are from the early childhood school. Two of the participants, from the Art and Education Technology schools stated that they have recruited children to participate in their research. Also, the places that they were awarded their degrees from does not be a matter in conducting research with children as some of them got their degree from the KSA and others from abroad, and both have undertaken research with children. Also, their years of experience is not a reason for including children in research; although some of the participants have many years of experience in the field, they still have not included children in any of their research studies, such as Participant 3. On the other hand, Participant 24 reported between 1-5 years experience and has conducted research with children. What is more, their status and their field are not considered reasons to

increase the number of studies that are conducted with children, as one lecturer has conducted research with children while some assistant professors from the early childhood schools, such as Participant 3, have not conducted any research with children.

### ***5.H.1(2) Factor interpretation***

This group of participants considered that they are familiar with and have a good understanding of the concept of children's right to a voice (CR1: -3) (CR2: +3), as Participant 41 commented:

*The concept of children's right to express themselves is not only clear in my point of view, but I have also become obsessed by it as I witness the recurrent child abuse and the inability of the children to express themselves.*

Also Participant 27 commented:

*I believe that a child has the right to be a decision maker and to be treated respectfully and decently in a way that resembles the way adults are treated, if not better.*

They agreed that research ethics, when dealing with children, are very important (CR4: +3), and that affording the same attention to ethics when working with children in research, as with adult participants, is essential (CR3: +5). Participant 27 made the following statement:

*In my perspective, research ethics are a very important aspect when dealing with children. Although I took photos of children with special needs (disabled children) during the course of the research for my PhD thesis, I have not published their photos in it because I have not asked for their permission, and as a kind of respect for the participant's privacy. I believe that we should be taking the issue of research ethics seriously as we, in the Arab World, are taking this issue for granted that we are reluctant to inform the participant that he/she is used as a sample in a specific research. This is illogical as every person has the right to decide whether or not to participate and his/her privacy should be respected.*

These participants believed that researchers have to know that it is the child's right to be given enough time to decide whether to participate or not in research (Autonomy 33: +3) (Autonomy34: -5), as Participant 42 commented:

*I have good educational experience with regard to childhood characteristics that show the child's ability to make decisions. Therefore, children are free to decide whether to participate or not.*

Additionally, they agreed with the idea that children should be given regular reminders that they can withdraw from the research if they feel uncomfortable or upset (Autonomy29: +1). The participants considered that having children participate in

research is not only a useful source of data or a result of the researcher supervisor's decision (CR5: -1) (CR12: -1). They would rather include children as research participants, allowing their voices and viewpoints to be heard (CR8: +1) (CR 11: +1). The participants believed that only children can represent themselves (CR 9: +2) (CR10: -2) and disagreed with the idea that the opinions of educational experts are more valuable than children's views (CR14: -2). What is more, they considered that children have the right to express themselves, but most Saudi children cannot refuse an adult's request for them to participate in research (Ethics16: -1).

The holders of this viewpoint do not see that children lack real understanding about what it means to decide on participating in research (Autonomy 31:-2). According to their views, children have the right to participate in research; they considered that it is very important to inform children about the research plan (Autonomy38: -4), and they strongly agreed that it is the child's right to be given a detailed explanation about the nature of the research in order that they may decide upon their participation (Autonomy 37: +4) (Autonomy 32: +4). They also see that children have the right to be informed, not only their parents (Non-M 51: -4), (Non-M 52: +2), about the potential risks they might face whilst participating in the research, and also it is their right to know about the research outcome and have the findings shared with them (Beneficence 45: +2) (Beneficence 46: -2). However, they did not see that, in research, it is the children's right to withhold their answers from their parents (Non-M 53: -1), but that the researcher should obtain consent from both the parents and the child for the involvement of a child in research (Autonomy 36: +4) (Autonomy 35: -4), as

Participant 27 said:

*Although, in my opinion a child has the right to be a decision maker, I strongly believe as well in the final role of the parents in making the decision, as they are the ones responsible for their child. They have the right to know the type of experience their child will go through.*

Thus, asking participants to sign western-style consent forms is not seen as strange or inappropriate as they thought (Ethics17: -1) for Saudi participants. This encourages them to apply procedures for obtaining consent, as required at western universities, in order to raise awareness about research ethics in the KSA (Ethics18: +1). As Participant 41 commented:

*Generally speaking, I feel that there is a lack of awareness with regard to the rights of participants, especially children. This results in violation of others'*

*rights, especially children's, because they irresponsibly speak about the problems of children and people.*

Thus, they agreed to having ethics forms and procedures in the KSA because they see that it is necessary for researchers to have special training courses on ethics (Ethics20: –3), and they further considered that it is the universities' responsibilities to provide such types of course (Ethics19: +3), meaning they want to increase society's awareness about ethics, as Participant 35 commented:

*They should offer this kind of course because of the lack of awareness about the importance of the research.*

They considered that greater attention to ethical guidelines should be afforded when completing research, and they believed that it should be compulsory and followed when conducting research with children (Ethics27: +5) (Ethics28: –5), as Participant 42 commented:

*I believe that the all researchers should be obliged to commit themselves to research ethics in order to come up with accurate results.*

On the other hand, they do not believe that ethics forms and procedures are in place to protect the researchers or the participants (Ethics23: –2) (Ethics24: –3), but rather that ethics forms, in general, are important because they help the researcher when planning their fieldwork (Ethics25: +2). Furthermore, they identified that their institutions do not have their own ethics forms and that it is not the researcher's duty to create one (Ethics21: –1) (Ethics22: –1); the researcher has to know that she/he should try to capture the experiences of as wide a range of children as possible because children are different and have different abilities, and their age and gender play a role in their responses (Justice39: +1). Thus, the researcher has to capture children's voices from both genders (Justice41: +2) (Justice42: –2) and be sure that all children enjoy their participation in research (Justice43: +2) (Justice44: –3). Furthermore, it is vital that the researcher respects the children's wishes as to whether or not their identity is revealed, and furthermore they need to ensure sensitivity if she/he reveals a child participant's identity to a third party (Non-M49: +1) (Non-M50: +1).

### ***5.H.2 Factor 2: acceptance of the concept of ethics***

The holders of this factor have strong beliefs regarding the importance of having ethics guidelines for adults and children; these should be compulsory and be afforded the same attention for both groups. Moreover, factor 2 participants want to increase the awareness

of research ethics in the KSA; this could happen by using the consent process, as required in western universities, and they consider that each university should provide training courses on research ethics because they are needed to protect the participants and the researchers. About their beliefs regarding children’s right to a voice, these participants have an understanding of the children’s right to a voice concept, but not to a significant degree. However, they see that only children can represent themselves and that the researcher should capture children’s voices from both genders, with the opinion of educational experts being deemed less valuable than children’s views because no one can represent children better than they can represent themselves. Furthermore, it was considered unnecessary to inform children about the potential risks they might face during their participation process; informing their parents is enough. What is more, they believed that power lies with the parents when their children participate in research, giving them the right to see their children’s responses.

**5.H.2(1) Demographic information**

**Table 14: Demographic Data for Factor 2**

<b>N</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>School Department</b>	<b>Current status</b>	<b>Degree place</b>	<b>Years of experience</b>	<b>Research frequency with children</b>
7**	PNU	Curriculum & Instruction	Assistant Professor	KSA	16–20	---
12*	KSU	Psychology	Assistant Professor	Abroad-UK	16–20	---
19	KSU	Special education	Assistant Professor	KSA	11–15	1
22	KSU	Art	Assistant Professor	KSA	16–20	---
31	KSU	Early Childhood	Professor	Abroad-UK	More than 20	---
51	KSU	Early Childhood	Lecturer	KSA	6–10	---

\*\* Highest loading participant

\* Second-highest loading participant

**5.H.2(1A) Interpretation of the demographic data for Factor 2**

Factor 2 has an eigenvalue of 4.00 and explains 8% of the study variance (Table 7, p. 117). The total number of participants is six, and they are significantly associated with this factor. They are females, one from PNU and five from KSU, and all of them are

from the education department at both universities but from different schools. Two are from early childhood schools, one from Art, one from Special Education, one from Psychology and one from Curriculum and Instruction. In regards to their current status, four of them are Assistant Professors, one a Professor and one a Lecturer, and concerning where they gained their degrees from, four were gained in the KSA and two abroad. What is more, in consideration of their experience as educational researchers, one has 6–10 years, one has 11-15 years, three have 16–20 years, and one has more than 20 years' experience. In addition, only one participant has undertaken research with children and just one research.

The participants' acceptance of the ethics concept could have emerged because most of them are from KSU so that will open different windows to new knowledge. Most are Assistant Professors so their level of education is high and they have long experience in their field. Also, they are from different school of education departments which could be a reason why they have this perspective because the diversity of their knowledge and their background means they are more open-minded to accepting a new concept, such as the ethics issue. However, although most of them are Assistant Professors, and one of them a Professor and the majority have long experience, they have not included children in their research. Only one (Participant 19) has conducted research with children; she is an Assistant Professor, from KSU, from the Special Education school and got her degree in KSA. Meanwhile the Professor (Participant 31) from the early childhood school got her degree from abroad and has longer experience than the Assistant Professor but she has not conducted any research with children.

#### ***5.H.2(2) Factor interpretation***

These participants have strong beliefs concerning the importance of ethics guidelines, particularly when participants are children. These have to be compulsory and are assigned more attention if the participants in the research are children (Ethics27: +5).

As Participant 19 stated:

*This is a very dangerous statement as it demolishes the basics of the research. For the welfare of the researcher and society, following the guidelines to the letter is very important.*

Also, they have strong beliefs about using ethics in research for participants, whether with children or adults; in both cases, there has to be the same attention given (CR3: +4) (CR4: +5). What is more, they see that it is the researcher's role to create the ethics



forms for their research if their institution does not have its own forms (Ethics22: +1) (Ethics21: -2); however, each university has to provide training courses about research ethics because they are necessary (Ethics19: +4) (Ethics20: -4), as Participant 7 mentioned:

*We need this kind of course so that researchers can come to a better understanding of the proper ways of dealing with participants, whether they are children or adults.*

These participants want to increase awareness of research ethics in the KSA; this could happen through the use of the consent process, as required in western universities (Ethics18: +3), and by familiarising Saudi participants with such a concept (Ethics17: -1). Additionally, they considered that the procedures and completion of ethics forms, for their research, do not take a long time (Ethics26: -2), and they help the researcher to plan their fieldwork (Ethics25: +2). As Participant 31 commented:

*Because the research ethics pave the way for the researcher.*

On the other hand, they considered that ethics forms and procedures are designed to protect the participants (Ethics23: -4) and the researchers (Ethics24: -3). Also, they felt that most Saudi children cannot refuse adults' requests when asked to participate in research (Ethics16: -2), although some children have seen that it is easy to reject this order (Ethics15: -1).

Concerning their beliefs regarding children's right to a voice, these participants have a good understanding of, and familiarity with, the children's right to a voice concept (CR1:-1) (CR2: +1). Also, they see that only children can represent themselves and their viewpoints (CR10: -5) (CR9: +2). As Participant 7 mentioned:

*If I wanted to conduct a successful research about children, I should give them the chance to properly express themselves.*

This participant further stated that the opinion of educational experts is less valuable than children's views because no one can represent children better than children themselves (CR14: -4). Furthermore, these participants believe in including children in research and being sure that all children must enjoy their participation in research (Justice44: -3) (Justice43: +1) because they are a useful source of data (CR5: +1). As Participant 19 commented:

*It is difficult to evaluate how beneficial most of the research is, without actually applying them to children.*

Furthermore, researchers need to allow this to happen, not because of their researcher supervisor's decision (CR12: -3) or to benefit their careers (CR7: -2), but because children need to be allowed to have their views heard (CR11: +3). Further, they see that it is necessary to give children time to decide whether or not to participate in research (Autonomy34: -2) because the children may lack real understanding about the participation decision (Autonomy31: +2). They feel that researchers should capture the experience and children's voices from as wide a range of children as possible (e.g., in terms of ability and gender, etc.) because their perspectives are different (Justice39: +2) (Justice40: +1) (Justice41: +3), even if they see that it might be difficult to include only one gender (Justice42: -5). Participant 19 echoed this:

*I am against this statement,(42), because I am not sexually biased, especially that the comparison between the two genders is quite important in some researches.*

In addition, they considered that it would be an appropriate way for the participants, if they are children, for researchers to provide an incentive to thank them for their participation (Beneficence48: +1).

On the other hand, these participants do not have confidence in children being an education research resource. They believed that, if a researcher wants to understand the educational experience, children are not the right people to ask (CR13: -1), and they considered that informing children about the nature of the research is unnecessary and will not help them in reaching a decision regarding their participation (Autonomy37: -1). Furthermore, it is unnecessary to inform children about the potential risks that they might face during their participation; informing their parents is enough (Non-M51: +4). As Participant 12 commented:

*I believe this statement,(51), is very important for the parents in order not to be deceived and because discussing the risks with children would make them get scared or over react.*

It was also considered necessary to share the finding with the children but not their right to know about the research outcomes (Beneficence45:-2) (Beneficence46:-1). What is more, if children decide to be participants in research, consent has to be obtained from both themselves and their parents (Autonomy36: +2), as Participant 19 emphasised:

*Taking the parent's permission is one of the most significant research ethics, especially in the field of special education.*

Furthermore, if they fill in the consent forms, they have to complete their participation in the study (Autonomy30: +3). What is more, these participants believed that power lies with the parents when their children participate in research, giving them the right to see their children's responses (Non-M54: +2) (Non-M53: -3); however, they respect children's wishes to reveal their identity (Non-M49: +1) even if that wish is considered an unethical move.

### ***5.H.3 Factor 3: Children's voice is unnecessary***

Prior to presenting the interpretation of this factor, there is the need to remark that this is the factor that has the lowest number of participants at just two; however, the decision has been made to keep this in because it is negative (participants involved do not believe in children's right to a voice so do not include them in research) and shows a different viewpoint. However, had the sample contained more participants, it is possible that more would share this view. What is more, there is no issue with having only two loader participants; as Brown (1980) and Watts and Stenner (2012) suggest, a factor can be interpreted with only two loaders but no less than two.

The holders of this view do not have a belief in children's right to a voice because they perceived that children do not have a good understanding of the children's right to a voice concept, and that adults can represent children's viewpoints. In addition, they disagreed with including children in research because it is not the researcher's duty, further believing that children are not a useful source of data. These participants also thought that children's voices should not be heard, and they are not the right people to ask if the researcher is to understand educational experience. However, the participants considered that, if the researcher has children participate in her/his research, it is enough to inform the parents – not the child - about the research risks. Unfortunately, however, these participants also had strong viewpoints about giving children's parents the power and right to have a look at their children's answers, but the researcher has to be careful not to reveal children's identities when they are participants in research. They agreed with research ethics when dealing with children, and also agreed with affording the same attention to both adult and child participants. In regards to children participating in research, they did not believe that it is necessary for them to have time to decide whether or not to participate, but it is not their right to know about the research outcomes if they decide to participate in the research. Moreover, when children and

their parents have consented to taking part in the research, it is not important to complete their participation.

**5.H.3(1) Demographic information**

**Table 15: Demographic Data for Factor 3**

<b>N</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>School Department</b>	<b>Current status</b>	<b>Degree place</b>	<b>Years of experience</b>	<b>Research frequency with children</b>
15**	KSU	Curriculum & Instruction	Assistant Professor	KSA	1–5	-
26 *	KSU	Education Technology	Assistant Professor	KSA	11–15	-

\*\* *Highest loading participant*

\* *Second-highest loading participant*

**5.H.3(1A) Interpretation of the demographic data for Factor 3**

Factor 3 has an eigenvalue of 2.00 and explains 4% of the study variance (Table 7, p. 117). The total number of participants is two; they are significantly associated with this factor. Both are female and both from KSU, have roles as Assistant Professors, have earned their degrees from the KSA and have not undertaken research with children. Moreover, both of them are from the Education Department but from different schools: one from Curriculum and Instruction and the other from Education Technology. Their experience as educational researchers spans 1–5 years and 11–15 years respectively.

The perspectives of the participants’ factors do not match with their demographic information, as both of them work at KSU, one of the largest universities in the KSA, and they are both Assistant Professors, but these reasons did not impact their beliefs about the importance of children’s voice. Also, their years of experience are not considered a reason for their perspectives and their willingness to conduct research involving children because one of them has short experience and the other has longer experience. However, their perspectives might have emerged because neither of them is from the early childhood school so they have a lack of knowledge about the children’s voice issue. Also, they may hold this perspective because they gained their degrees within the KSA, so they did not have the opportunity to learn about this area of

knowledge. Further, because of field they work in, they have not conducted any research with children.

### ***5.H.3(2) Factor interpretation***

The holders of this view had a negative belief in the children's right to a voice concept because they perceived that children do not have a good understanding of this concept (CR2: -1) and that not only children can represent their views (CR9: -5) but adults can present children's viewpoints (CR10: +1). They also considered that researchers should not try to capture the experiences of as wide a range of children as possible (e.g., in terms of ability, gender, age, etc.) (Justice39: -2) because all children have the same perspectives (Justice40: -2). Furthermore, they disagreed with including children in research for a number of reasons, including that it is not the researcher's duty (CR6: -3), they are not a useful source of data (CR5: -5), their participation will not allow their voice to be heard (CR8:-3), as Participant 15 mentioned:

*I will not be involving children only because they are a source of information, but also because the findings will help them and help the society in general. Getting them to be involved for my own benefit only is selfish.*

Moreover, they also are not the right people to ask if seeking to understand the educational experience (CR13: -3) this might be because, as Participant 26 commented:

*I do not think that children are useful for my field of study.*

On the other hand, the participants considered that they are familiar with the concept of children's right to a voice (CR1: -1) and if they included them as participants in their research it will be their decision not their researcher supervisor's decision (CR12: -1). Thus, the researcher has to respect children's wishes to reveal their identity (Non-M49: +1), and further the researcher has to be careful to not reveal children's identities when they are participants in research (Non-M50: +4). Moreover, these participants believed that children have to be informed about any potential risks regarding the research in an effort to help them to make their decision pertaining to participation (Non-M52: +5), as Participant 15 mentioned:

*Many of our research needs research ethics when dealing with adults generally and with children specifically because of their young ages and limited knowledge.*

However, the researcher should have to inform children's parents and children themselves, about the research risks (Non-M51: +2) (Non-M52: +5) thus giving the parents the same right as the child to know about the research risks. On the other hand,

they had strong views about the (Non-M54: +5) statement, which gives children's parents the power and the right to have a look at their children's answers, thus indicating that they do not give the children, as participants, the right to hide their answers from their parents.

The holders of this view believed in the ethics concept because they agreed with research ethics when dealing with children; they considered that this is very important (CR4: +3). They also considered that the same attention to ethics is needed when working with adults, as with child research participants (CR3: +3). Participant 15 mentioned, when interviewed, that she agreed with ethics when having children participate in research because they are under age and have less knowledge, and she also agreed to needing ethics forms and procedures with adults. She said:

*Without clear ethical guidelines, data could be improperly used and collected and the privacy of people would be violated. Some data could also harm the participants. Ethical guidelines are thus crucial.*

Also, these participants pay a great deal of attention to ethical guidelines, which they see as compulsory when conducting research with children (Ethics27: +2) (Ethics28: -3), as it helps researchers to plan their fieldwork (Ethics25: +2). On the other hand, they see that ethics forms and procedures are designed not to protect participants and researchers (Ethics23: -2) (Ethics24: -1), and it is not the university's responsibility to provide training courses in research ethics (Ethics19: -1), although they believed that training courses are necessary (Ethics20: -1). What is more, they considered that most Saudi children cannot refuse adults' orders when they ask them to participate in research (Ethics15: +1) (Ethics16: -3).

In regards to children participating in research, the participants considered that it is necessary for children to have time to decide whether or not to participate (Autonomy33: +4) (Autonomy34: -1), and that it is very important to inform children about the research plan (Autonomy38: -2) (Autonomy37: +1); however, it is not the children's right to know about the research outcomes if they decide to participate in research (Beneficence45: -4). However, if they decide to participate it would be nice if the researcher could provide the children with an incentive to thank them for their participation (Beneficence48: +2). Furthermore, they see that the researcher should obtain consent from both the parents and the child to include a child in research (Autonomy36: +2). There was also agreement that it could be enough to obtain only the

parents' permission for their children's participation (Autonomy35: +1), and so they agreed to opposite statements. Furthermore, when children and their parents have consented to taking part in the research, it is not important to complete their participation in the study (Autonomy30: -4), possibly because they see that children cannot make a decision about their participation because of their lack of understanding (Autonomy31: +1). However, if the child decides to take part, it is their right to have a detailed explanation about the research steps as this would help them to make their decision (Autonomy32: +2). In addition, the participants indicated that it is easier to include children of both genders in research and to allow them to express their viewpoints (Justice42: -4) (Justice41: +3); and all children must enjoy their experience of participating in research (Justice44: +4). At the end of this factor I can say it is not the factor that just has different viewpoints, but also sometimes the participants had opposite opinions for the same viewpoint. Thus, I am not sure about the validity of the participants' sorting of the Q-set, it might be that they did not understand the process or they were not accurate in their choices.

#### ***5.H.4 Factor 4: Ethical approval and consent by research participant is important***

The holders of this factor believed that they are familiar with the concept of children's right to a voice, and only children can represent themselves and their viewpoints, not adults. Furthermore, it is the child's right to withhold their answers from their parents if they participate in research, and there is a need to be careful not to reveal the child's identity to a third party. What is more, they considered it to be the child's right and that it is necessary to give them enough time to decide whether or not to participate in research because they have the ability to decide about their participation, and giving them an incentive for their participation is unnecessary; however, they disagree about including both genders in research. The holders of this view agreed in relation to ethical policy, ethics guidelines and consent forms when children participate in research, and that researchers should afford the same attention to the ethics process with both adults and children alike. Nonetheless, when working with children, it is more important and should be compulsory. These participants believed that completing ethics forms and procedures for their research would help the researcher to plan their fieldwork, although it may take a longer time. What is more, they considered that each university has to provide training courses for researchers about research ethics as a necessity.

**5.H.4(1) Demographic information**

**Table 16: Demographic Data for Factor 4**

<b>N</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>School Department</b>	<b>Current status</b>	<b>Degree place</b>	<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Research frequency with children</b>
1	PNU	Special education	Assistant Professor	Abroad-USA	1–5	---
9**	KSU	Educational Administration	Assistant Professor	Abroad-USA	16–20	---
11	KSU	Psychology	Assistant Professor	Abroad-UK	6–10	2-6
14*	KSU	Curriculum & Instruction	Assistant Professor	KSA	1–5	---
17	KSU	Curriculum & Instruction	Assistant Professor	KSA	6–10	---
18	KSU	Special education	Assistant Professor	KSA	More than 20	2-6
20	KSU	Special education	Assistant Professor	KSA	16–20	---
29	KSU	Education Technology	Lecturer	Abroad-USA	1–5	---
33	KSU	Early childhood	Professor	KSA	More than 20	More than 11
36	KSU	Early childhood	Assistant Professor	KSA	16–20	---

\*\* Highest loading participant

\* Second-highest loading participant

**5.H.4(1A) Interpretation of the demographic information**

Factor 4 has an eigenvalue of 7.00 and explains 13% of the study variance (Table 7, pp.117). The total number of participants was ten, and they are significantly associated with this factor. They are all females: one from PNU and nine from KSU; all of them are from the education departments at both universities, but they are from different schools, with two from the early childhood schools, three from Special Education, one from Psychology and two from Curriculum and Instruction, one from Educational Administration, and one from Education Technology. In regards to their current status, there are eight Assistant Professors, one Professor and one Lecturer. In relation to where they earned their degrees, six were in the KSA and four from abroad. In relation to their experience as educational researchers, three have 1–5 years’ experience, two have 6–10 years’ experience, three have 16–20 years and two have more than 20 years’ experience.



Three of the participants had undertaken research involving children, two of them had completed between 2–6 research studies with children, and one had conducted more than 11 research studies with children.

Most of the participants for this factor are from KSU, which could be the reason that they have this belief in the importance of consent forms, because working at a large university such as KSU opens different windows to a diversity of knowledge as has been mentioned above in Factor 1 (see *5.H.1.(1A) Interpretation of the demographic data for Factor 1* p. 137). Also, most are Assistant Professors, with one Professor; thus their level of education may be another reason for them to hold this perspective.

Another reason for this perspective could be the place that they obtained their degrees from - four of them while studying abroad. What is more, the diversity of their field could be a reason for this perspective because they have acquired different knowledge although all of them belong to the Education Department. However, the places that they gained their degrees from may not have encouraged them to include children in their research because they had gained their degrees in the KSA. Just Participant 11, who got her degree abroad, had completed research with children. What is more, years of experience could be a reason for the participants to include children in research even if they are not from the early childhood schools.

#### ***5.H.4(2) Factor interpretation***

The participants in this factor stressed the use of consent forms with children and parents. They considered that the researcher should obtain consent forms from both the parents and the child to include the child in the research (Autonomy36: +5) (Autonomy35: -5), with three participants from this factor sorting it as a most agreed statement. Accordingly their comments were as follows:

Participant 9:

*What I know is that till the age of 14, one should ask for the parent's consent for their child's participation. For children older than 14, the consent of both parents and children should be sought. A child that is aged 15 is more likely to be able to make his/her own decision and thus could be asked directly. I also believe that one should ask for the consent of anyone who is responsible for the child, even the head teacher, if it is difficult to reach the parent.*

Participant 11:

*Even in the case of the parent's consent, the child must also be asked for their consent as he/she is the one to participate, not the parents.*

Participation 14:

*Research ethics should be unified, especially for children because of their young age and limited experience.*

Furthermore, the participants believed that they are familiar with the concept of children's right to a voice (CR1: -4); thus they considered that only children can represent themselves and their viewpoints, not adults (CR10: -4) (CR9: +1), and that they should be included in research to allow their voice and viewpoints to be heard (CR8: +1) (CR11: +1). Moreover, it is the child's right to be given detailed explanations about the research, information about the research plan, and the nature of the research, so as to ensure their decisions regarding their participation (Autonomy32: +2) (Autonomy38: -1) (Autonomy37: +2). In this vein, Participant 17 stated:

*The child can comprehend the research plan if explained in a method that suits his/her understanding.*

Moreover, it is the child's right to know about the research outcomes (Beneficence45: +1) and their right to withhold their answers from their parents if they participate in research (Non-M53: +3). Additionally, the researcher has to ignore the child's wish to reveal their identity (Non-M49: -1) and be careful to not reveal the child's identity to a third party when they are participants in their research (Non-M50: +3).

Concerning the participation concept, these participants considered it as being the child's right and necessary for them to be given enough time to decide whether or not to participate in the research (Autonomy34: -5) (Autonomy33: +2), with the agreement that children have the ability to decide on their participation (Autonomy31: -4). What is more, researchers have to capture the experience from as wide a range of children as possible (Justice39: +2) because not all children have the same perspectives (Justice40: -2).

These participants considered that including children in research is their research supervisor's decision (CR12: +1) because children are not the right people to ask if you want to understand the educational experience (CR13: -2); they accept children participating in research but do not want to try this experience. What is more, they accepted that it is necessary to inform children about the potential risks of the research that they might face during participation, where merely giving parents information is not enough (Non-M51: -2) (Non-M52: +2), and also giving children an incentive after their participation is unnecessary (Beneficence48: -3). They also considered that

including both genders in research is difficult (Justice42: -3) and that it is enough to capture the voice of children from a single gender (Justice41: -1), however, whether children are of both genders or just one gender, the researcher has to be sure that they are enjoying their participation in the research (Justice 44: -1).

The participants in this factor agreed about ethical policy when children participate in research. Thus, they would afford the same attention to ethics when the researcher is working with both adults and children (CR3: +3); however, when working with children it is more important (CR4: +5). Also, they had strong beliefs about the importance of ethics guidelines, particularly when the participants are children, and state that these have to be compulsory (Ethics27: +4) (Ethics28: -3). They viewed that completing ethics forms and procedures for their research will help the researcher to plan their fieldwork (Ethics25: +4), although it may take a long time (Ethics26: +3). What is more, they want to increase the awareness of research ethics in the KSA, which could happen by adopting consent procedures, as required in western universities (Ethics18: +2), as Participant 9 mentioned in her interview:

*I hope they make use of research ethics in Saudi Arabia. Frankly speaking, I had never known anything about them before and only got to know more about research ethics when I studied abroad and applied them in my research, and it was, at that time, something new to me. When I went back to Saudi Arabia, I found that research ethics have not been applied yet, and that researchers only seek the consent of the Ministry to facilitate his/her work to access the schools with the parents knowing nothing, whether their child has participated or not. Because I have studied abroad, I asked for the consent of the MA students who participated in my research and explained to them the nature of the research and the fact that I will be giving them nick-names as this is their right as participants.*

What is more, asking Saudi participants to complete such a form would seem appropriate and will get them used to adopting this process in the future (Ethics17: -2) because, as Participant 1 stated:

*Research ethics are the same for all nations and places.*

Furthermore, they see that it is the researcher's role to create the ethics forms for their research if their institution does not have their own forms (Ethics22: +1) (Ethics21: -2); however, each university has to provide training courses about research ethics because it is necessary (Ethics19: +4) (Ethics20: -2). On the other hand, they see that ethics forms and procedures are designed not in mind to protect either the participants (Ethics23: -1) or the researcher (Ethics24: -3), and that most Saudi children cannot refuse adults'

requirements when they are asked to participate in research (Ethics16: -1) (Ethics15: +1). Participant 18 commented on this situation:

*From my own experience in field work with children, they never refuse to participate because they are obliged by the school to participate.*

### **5.H.5 Factor 5: Belief in children’s right to represent their viewpoints**

Those holding this view have the strong belief that children, and not adults, are able to represent themselves, which is why they agree that including children as participants allows their voice and viewpoints to be heard as they are a useful source of data. Moreover, it is easier to include both genders of children in research in order to express their viewpoints because all children’s perspectives are different and all children must enjoy their participation in research. What is more, they have strong beliefs about protecting children’s identities when they include them in research, and maintain that parents do not have the right to see their children’s responses when they have participated in research. Based on this, the factor holders directed attention to ethical guidelines, where these should be compulsory with children. Further, the researcher should obtain consent from both parents and the child to include the child in research, with the children having the right to be given enough time to decide whether or not to participate in the research.

#### **5.H.5(1) Demographic information**

**Table 17: Demographic Data for Factor 5**

<b>N</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Current status</b>	<b>Degree place</b>	<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Research frequency with children</b>
5*	PNU	Early childhood	Assistant Professor	KSA	11–15	1
8	PNU	Curriculum & Instruction	Assistant Professor	KSA	11–15	1
34**	KSU	Early childhood	Assistant Professor	Abroad-USA	1–5	1
44	KSU	Early childhood	Lecturer	KSA	16–20	---

\*\* Highest loading participant

\* Second-highest loading participant

### **5.H.5(1A) Interpretation of the demographic information for Factor 5**

Factor 5 has an eigenvalue of 5.00 and explains 9% of the study variance (Table 7, p. 117). There are a total of four participants, and they are significantly associated with this factor. They are all females, two from PNU and two from KSU, and all of them are from the education department at both universities but from different schools: three from the early childhood school and one from the Curriculum and Instruction school. In regard to their current status, three are Assistant Professors and one is a Lecturer, whilst in relation to the place at which they earned their degree, three of them did so in the KSA whilst one obtained their degree abroad. What is more, in terms of their experience as educational researchers, one has 1-5 years' experience, two have 11–15 years and one has 16–20 years. Three of these participants had undertaken research with children, but have done only one such study.

The participants for this factor differ from those of the other factors because two are from KSU and two from PNU; therefore, their perspectives are not influenced by the university that they work at. However, the reason for this perspective could be because most of them are from the early childhood school so they are interested in children issues. Their status is Assistant Professor and they have long experience in their field. Also, their status is considered a reason why they would include children in their research as all who conducted research with children are Assistant Professors. The place that they gained their degree from is not considered as a reason to include children in their research because two got them from the KSA and one from abroad. Also, the participants' field and their experience is not considered as reasons to include children in research as one participant was from the Early Childhood field and has long experience but has not done any research with children. This might be because she is a lecturer so she does not have opportunity to do much research.

### **5.H.5(2) Factor interpretation**

The holders of this view considered that they are familiar with and have a good understanding of the children's rights concept (CR1: -1) (CR2: +1). Furthermore, they have a strong belief that children, not their parents, are able to represent themselves and their viewpoints (CR10: -5) (CR9: +4). As Participant 5 commented:

*Mostly, adults cannot objectively express the children's point of view because their answers will be affected by their previous experience.*

This is why they agreed that including children as research participants allows their voice and viewpoints to be heard (CR8: +3) (CR11: 1). As Participant 34 mentioned:

*When we allowed for children's voices to be heard, new things emerged and we came to know new things we have never known before about the child's point of view.*

This was stated because they are a useful source of data (CR5: +3), as Participant 34 mentioned:

*We benefit from children, so why do we ignore them when we can conduct research with them? Unfortunately we do research on them not with them.*

Moreover, children's views are more valuable than those of educational experts (CR14: -2). Furthermore, the participants held strong beliefs about protecting children's identities when including them in research (Non-M50: +5), and they considered that it is the child's right to know about the research outcome (Beneficence45: +1), and they can respect their wish to reveal their identity if they want to do so (Non-M49: +2).

On the other hand, the holders of this view considered that parents do not have the right to see their children's responses when they have participated in research (Non-M54: -3) (Non-M53: +2), and it is unnecessary to inform children about the potential risks of the research that they might face during their participation (Non-M52: -1). They see that, if the researcher wants to understand the educational experience, children are not the right people to ask (CR13: -1). Furthermore, they see that including children in research is not their researcher supervisor's decision (CR12: -3); nor should it be done to benefit their own careers (CR7: -1).

What is more, the holders of this view also paid great attention to ethical guidelines, considering that these should be compulsorily followed when conducting research with children (Ethics27: +4) (Ethics28: -4). As Participant 34 mentioned:

*I strongly believe that research ethics should be obligatory, especially when children participate because most people do not care about this issue and take it for granted because the participant is 'just a child' so why take his/her consent! Many researchers think that a child has not got the right to refuse anything asked by adults, so they can be, for instance, photographed without their consent. Sadly enough, till now, many researchers are not aware of the importance of research ethics when dealing with children because they do not respect them.*

This is stated because they help researchers to plan their research (Ethics25: +1). Also, it is necessary in the KSA to provide training courses about ethics, and universities have

the responsibility to provide training courses in research ethics (Ethics20: -4) (Ethics19: +2). Importantly, even if universities do not have their own ethics forms, they have to create their own because it is not the researcher's duty to create one (Ethics21: -2) (Ethics22: -2). Thus, they have awareness about the research ethics concept because they are in agreement about applying, in the KSA, consent processes from western universities, which would be appropriate for Saudi participants (Ethics17: -1). On the other hand, they see that the attention to research ethics is not important when the researcher is working with child participants (CR4: -2), and that the ethics forms and procedures are designed in such a way that they do not protect participants or researchers (Ethics23: -2) (Ethics24: -3), but some Saudi children can refuse adults' order when they ask them to participate in research (Ethics15: -1).

Considering children's participation in research, the holders of this view believed that it is the child's right to be given enough time to decide whether or not they would like to participate in research (Autonomy34: -3) (Autonomy33: +2), and the researcher should obtain consent from both parents and the child to involve the child in research (Autonomy36: +4) (Autonomy35: -4), as Participant 44 commented:

*This is what studies have agreed upon in this field of study. Taking the consent of the parents is the first step and cannot be overlooked. However, the consent of children is also important, but without explaining all research details to children.*

Also, Participant 34 has the same opinion:

*If I think a child is too young to participate, I would at least tell his/her parents and ask for their consent. In my opinion, the child's consent is not as obligatory as the parent's, because a child may not fully comprehend what a research is and thus will be confused with the terms. That is why the concept should be simplified without going into so much detail.*

Further, the participants agreed that informing children about the nature of research (Autonomy37: +2) and regularly reminding them that they can withdraw from the research at any time (Autonomy29: +1) is important. What is more, it is easier to include both genders of children in research to express their viewpoints (Justice42: -5) (Justice41: +5), and all children must enjoy their participation in research (Justice44: -2) (Justice43: +3). Furthermore, they see that the researcher should try to capture the experience of as wide a range of children as possible (Justice39: +1) because all children's perspectives are different (Justice40: +3), and the researcher has to give children an incentive after participation because their involvement is not voluntary

(Beneficence48: +2). On the other hand, they considered it is unnecessary to inform them about the research plan (Autonomy38: +1), and that it is not their right to be given detailed explanations about the research steps because this will not help them to decide whether or not to participate (Autonomy32: -1).

## **5.I Feedback from the Q-participants after the Q-sorting process**

At Step 3 of the Q-sorting process (as mentioned in the Methodology Chapter Figure 3, p.86), the questionnaire was given to each participant for them to justify their choices for the ‘most agree’ sorting (+5) and the ‘most disagree’ sorting (-5), spanning Q1–Q2. This helped me, as the researcher, in the interpretation process to show that participants could choose the same statement but each one having a different reason. Further, they were asked for their opinions on the Q-methodology via five questions, and their answers are summarised in this section. For further details see Appendix 5.

### ***5.I.1 Q3: Are there any statements that are unclear? If so, can you suggest better phrasing?***

For this question, 20 participants did not answer and 21 participants answered ‘No’, whilst just 11 participants answered ‘Yes’. They agreed the unclear statements as: CR13, Ethics18, Ethics21, Ethics22, Autonomy37, Justice40, Justice43, Beneficence48 and Non-M50. However, Participants 8 and 43 agreed that some statements were similar, and therefore required more thought to understand them, and some of them had the same meaning. Furthermore, they stated that it took a long time to complete the process. What is more, Participants 17 and 39 mentioned that statement Ethics22: *It’s my duty to create my own ethical form to use with participants in research*, was not easy to understand, and that it is a fact and not a statement to express feelings or perspectives; therefore, they suggested that the statement be paraphrased to: ‘What is your opinion about ... ?’

In addition, Participants 44, 45 and 46 mentioned that statement Ethics18: *Procedures for taking consent as required at Western universities would be useful for raising awareness about research ethics in the KSA*, is long, unclear and they did not understand it. As a result, the majority of the Ethics statement themes were considered unclear; this might have been because ethics, as a concept, was new for some participants in the KSA.



### **5.1.2 Q4: Did any of the statements not seem to be useful and why?**

The majority of the participants, 43 in all, did not answer this question or answered 'No', which increased the validity of the statements, showing that they were valuable and covered the topic from different aspects. However, just nine participants identified that, in general, the statements were biased towards specific participants. One possible reason for this could have been because some of them saw that the participants of this study should be just from the early childhood schools because the topic is related to them. Others saw that the statements stimulated the participants because they did not have enough knowledge on the topic. Moreover, they considered that statements CR2, CR12, Ethics22, Autonomy29, Justice43 and Non-M54 were not useful, with Participants 28 and 40 considering statement CR2 as not appropriate to be asked of anyone.

### **5.1.3 Q5: Do you suggest adding any more statements? If so, what would they be?**

For this question, it was clear that most of the participants would answer 'No' because they continuously commented that there were too many statements; 46 participants' answers were either 'No', or there was no response. Just 6 participants suggested adding statements to explain the importance of the research for children and parents, about children's activities, about children's participation in general, adding children's age, adding information on ethics concept modules, and in consideration as to whether a researcher has the right to refuse a child's participation if the child wants to participate.

### **5.1.4 Q6: Could you tell me your overall thoughts and experiences of the Q-sort activity?**

The majority of participants liked the Q-methodology experience: 25 participants gave positive comments whilst just 10 participants wrote negative comments. Those who gave positive comments liked the experience and enjoyed the process, whilst those who gave negative comments complained about the time taken by the process and that there were too many statements. However, 18 participants did not understand the question, thus preferring not to answer or otherwise answering, '*This is the first time/I have never used it before/I do not have previous experience*'. As a result, the number of statements included was decreased in an effort to reduce the time required by participants.

Moreover, the question was paraphrased to: *Could you tell me your opinion about this method (Q-methodology)?*

**5.I.5 Q7: *Have you faced any problem while you are Q-sorting? If yes, please mention at which stage?***

For this question, 9 participants did not answer and 14 participants faced no problems. However, 38 participants faced some problems, the majority of which related to the card-sorting process: there were too many cards and they were too similar; the process took a long time; the need to write the statement numbers in the distribution caused confusion. Thus, the problem was based on the number of statements, which had to be decreased.

**5.I.6 Q8: *Do you have any suggestions to improve the future use of this tool? If yes, could you advise me please, how?***

Twenty of the participants would have preferred the process of the Q-sort to be online: making it free sorting not distribution; increasing the number of the +5 and –5 columns; whilst others wanted all statement cards on one large piece of paper so that they could see all statements whilst sorting them as that would make the process of choosing the statements easier. However, 17 participants did not give any suggestions and 15 did not answer the question.

**5.J The result of the policymakers' interviews**

**5.J.1 *Level of education***

The interviews were conducted with three policymakers, two from the NCC, one female and one male, and one male from the MOE. For ethical reasons, each participant was assigned a code letter: 'A', 'B' and 'C'. All of them are highly educated: 'A' has a PhD in education from the KSA, 'B' has an MA in Law, also from the KSA, and 'C' has a PhD in education from abroad.

**5.J.2 *What is your occupation and what are your responsibilities?***

The answer to this question, for ethical purpose, is not recorded as it could assist in identifying the participants.

**5.J.3 Are you aware of studies that involve children as participants in educational research?**

A:

*No, because any researcher has to have permission from the Ministry of Education, not from the National Commission for Childhood. Just, if the research is about the area of children's rights or the researcher wants to involve us as part of their study, like you, we offer any help that they need for their study and definitely in these cases we know about the research topic.*

B:

*Actually I know about them in general and have limited information that is related to my job responsibility, which is to coordinate between childhood stakeholders and sectors in the KSA that are interested in children and childhood issues, whether in the public sector or the private.*

C:

*Yes, I do because one of the research administration roles, at the Ministry of Education, is to present services or any help that the researcher needs, such as finding any study that they need for their research and simplify the permission process, when they want to start their fieldwork. So, they cannot start their fieldwork without our permission, whether they have children or adults participating and, to be honest a few permissions have been requested for research with children. However, childhood studies in general are not enough in the KSA and considered as few, maybe just 5% of studies are related to or have children participate in the research. From my point of view the reasons are because researchers want to do easy research, so they avoid having children participate in their research. Also, the majority of research in our country is quantitative not qualitative; children need qualitative research to express themselves. For example, children who are elementary, or young, cannot do questionnaires or maybe cannot interact with the researcher, when they interview them, because of their age. On the other hand children who are in high school can do the questionnaire simply. So the researchers prefer to deal with the young adult more than with the young child.*

The findings are as follows:

- There is no link between the NCC and the MOE when researchers want to have children participate in their research unless the researcher involves them.
- There is a lack of childhood studies in the KSA in general.
- There is a lack of belief concerning children's capabilities, as held by the policymakers.
- Researchers must have permission from the MOE to perform their fieldwork, regardless of whether their research is with children or adults.

- There is a lack of experience with qualitative research with young children because researchers are looking for easier research options. Moreover, qualitative and quantitative research might have different ethical considerations in the researcher's mind.

**5.J.4 Some researchers have involved children in their research, for example what do you see as the benefits and disadvantages of doing this? And why?**

A:

*I think that with research that is about children's behaviour, the child has to participate in, since their participation will be by a game or just to observe their behaviour for example. I do not think this kind of research will affect children. However, I see that the researcher has to have permission from the children's parents or any adult who has responsibility for him/her, such as the head teacher of the school. It's difficult to have permission just from the child, as they cannot decide to participate or not because he/she is young. On the other hand, if the research is in the medical area, the researcher has to ask the child if he/she wants to participate or not because this kind of research might affect the child. Thus, the permission should be from the child, their parents and the organisation of the research. Thus, I partly agree and disagree with having permission from the child because it depends on the research topic and research type.*

B:

*I see that hearing the child's voice is very important and all the international conventions emphasise it and the educational theories also. That means the child will benefit from this participation. However, the researcher has to be careful when he/she is dealing with children by respecting them, respecting their rights and being sure to provide a safe environment to protect them from any disadvantage that might affect them through their participation.*

C:

*From my point of view nobody else can express other's views, so the child is the best person to express their own views. Also, children are always honest, so when I have them participate in research they will benefit, as they can express their needs and give the researcher the real answers. Children don't hide anything, they are honest and spontaneous and that is what the researcher wants and needs, to have real findings from the participants. The disadvantage is that it could be signify abuse if they are asked inappropriate questions that don't match with the literature review of the research. Thus, we request the parent's permission to have their child participate in any research and put it as a condition because the child does not understand the situation because of his/her age. Also, the parents have the right to refuse their child's participation and they can see their child's answers after his/her participation. However, we request parents' permission for the child who is at the elementary grade, not just the child's permission, but the researcher can ask them about their opinion if they want to participate or not (so it's the researcher's choice). What is more,*

*sometimes we, as the research administration, can refuse any research if we see it as inappropriate, such as if it is about sensitive issues, or does not match with our culture and our environment in the KSA.*

The findings are as follows:

- Children lack understanding to decide on their participation in research (Statement: Autonomy 31). Gaining parents' permission for their child's participation is enough, without asking the child (Statement: Autonomy 35) and the researcher should obtain consent form both the parents and the child to include a child in research (Statement: Autonomy 36). Participating children need not be informed about the research plan because they are too young to understand (Statement: Autonomy 38).
- Ethical guidelines when conducting research with children should be optional (Statement: ethics 28).
- The researcher only has to inform the parents, not the child, about potential risks to their child through participating in the research (Statement Non-Maleficence51). Also parents have a right to see the responses of their children in research studies because their child is under age (Statement: Non-Maleficence54).
- Policymakers have a good understanding of the concept of children's right to a voice (Statement: CR2) and believe that only children can represent themselves (Statement: CR9).

***5.J.5 To what extent do you think researchers need to be aware of ethical issues when they choose children as participants in their research?***

A:

*It is very important, highly important. If the researcher has this point in mind they will consider many issues: such as writing the questions for the participants, how they will deal with them, even if they decide to observe the participant, they will think about the way to do it, even if they use ethical forms with participants. However, when I did my PhD I applied the use of a consent form personally with my participants, they were blind; I sat with them and explained my tool that I would use with them. After that I asked them what difficulties they have faced and how can I help them to find a solution for these difficulties by using my tool. I believed that I should ask my participants if they wanted or not to participate because if I did not, they would feel their participation as a load on them.*

*Actually, I think and am partly sure that science research has ethics guidelines and has some conditions for the participants when they want them to participate*

*in research, but from the educational side I am not sure. Also, I am not sure if social science research has ethics or not.*

B:

*I see that ethics is highly important with children if they participate in research because social science research requires expression of a person's views and that will help to understand children's needs from different aspects and related to the child, in direct and indirect ways.*

C:

*From my point of view they are not aware about ethics, whether with adults or children. However, I hope to increase society's awareness about the importance of ethics, parents' permission when their child participates in research and the benefits for them if they sign the consent forms. This awareness should be done through collaboration between the media and research disciplines.*

The findings are as follows:

- Procedures for taking consent as required at western universities would be useful for raising awareness about research ethics in the KSA (Statement: Ethics18). Researchers have to create their own ethics forms if they want to use them with research participants if they do not have one (Statement: Ethics 22). Educational researcher should have ethics forms and procedures which will help them when planning their fieldwork (Statement: Ethics25) and the ethical guidelines should be compulsory when conducting research with children (Statement: Ethics27).
- Researcher should obtain consent forms, from the parents and the child, to include the child in research (Statement: Autonomy36). Also informing children about the nature of the research is vital because it helps them to decide if they want to participate or not (Statement: Autonomy37).
- Ethics guidelines are more important for science research than for social science research.

**5.J.6 Do you have any particular ethical guidelines that you use? What are the mechanisms between the National Committee for Childhood and the researchers regarding ethics for the researcher when having children participate in research?**

A:

*No, there is not any connection between them until now, but I hope there will be between us and the researchers who are interested in children's issues. Also, I hope we will cooperate together to give the researcher permission for his/her*

*fieldwork. Until now the educational research administration is the place that has the responsibility for giving researchers permission to do their research, whether with children or adults.*

B:

*It could have been taken theoretically, not practically, until now but this is not the National Committee for Childhood's role. Our aim is to set the general policy for childhood in the KSA, making plans for children's programmes etc. So it is considered as a planning institution not an implementing institution. However, I agree with ethical guidelines because from my point of view they protect children when they participate in research and protect their rights.*

C:

*Until now we do not have any guidelines, but we have a plan to have some soon. We are thinking of having a Western-style consent form and developing it to be appropriate within Saudi culture and society. I am working now at my administration, the research administration at the Ministry of Education, to create ethics guidelines for researchers to use with adult and child participants. About the second part of the question, there is no connection between us until now.*

The findings are as follows:

- There is no communication between the NCC and the research administration at the MOE. Also, the NCC does not have any role when researchers do their research, even if the topic is about children's issues.
- Ethics forms and procedures are designed to protect and ensure the respect only of the participants (Statement: Ethics23). Also, the ethical guidelines should be compulsory when conducting research with child participants ( Statement: Ethics27)
- There is a plan, and they have started at the MOE to create ethics guidelines in the KSA.

***5.J.7 There are some events for Saudi children which they have participated in to express their views about such things as TED kids at Riyadh, your scholarship movie, etc. Do you know about these events? If yes, does the National Committee for Childhood sponsor these events? If no, why not?***

This question was posed only to the NCC participants.

A:

*I have heard about some of these events but the Committee does not support these events because there is a big gap between us and the other intuitions, such as civil society organisations. Also, unfortunately we don't have communication*

*between us, so in that case we are not the sponsors for these events. However, we plan to contact the Ministry of Culture and Media to do an educational media plan and we will have soon a seminar about this subject and we will try to have all sectors, that are interested in children and childhood issues, participate. I see that there is no awareness about increasing that awareness. The committee focuses on doing the five-year reports more than encouraging children's participation in activities or increasing society's awareness about the National Committee for Childhood.*

B:

*I have a very simple idea about these events but the Committee does not participate in these events because as I mentioned before it is considered to be a policy planner. On the other hand, the Committee is keen to participate in the events that can extend the children's rights concept by doing some publications with the public and private sectors.*

The findings are as follows:

- There are some efforts, although considered few, being made between the NCC and the Ministry of Culture and Media.
- Saudi society lacks awareness of the NCC role.
- There is no particular link between the NCC and the other institutions that are interested in children and childhood issues.

**5.J.8 Do you have any comments you want to add?**

A:

*Ethics issues are very important. I hope one of your research recommendations will be to create ethical guidelines for children in a simple way because I think people who study abroad have this ability to do the task in a simple and short way. I mean you can make a brochure with some points, no details, about the ethics and how it is important to make people aware about this issue. From my point of view, I think the ethics form has to be for children and adults and by agreement between the research centre at each university and the research administration at the Ministry of Education. Also, in that case the ethics form will be compulsory at universities. Actually, the ethics form is a good idea with children because it will allow them to express their opinion if they do not want to participate in research. They won't be shy to refuse to participate in research if they are asked to do so by researchers.*

B:

*Thank you for your interest in children's rights and childhood issues and we are looking forward to seeing more studies adopt these issues.*

C:

*Thank you for your questions.*



The findings are as follows:

- There should be more research about children's rights and childhood because there is a lack of such studies.
- Saudi children might find it difficult to refuse to participate in research if asked by an adult (Statement: Ethics15). Procedures for taking consent as required at western universities would be useful for raising awareness about research ethics in the KSA (Statement: Ethics18) and ethical guidelines should be compulsory when conducting research with child participants (Statement: Ethics27)
- People who study abroad have more awareness and background to create ethics guidelines.
- The same attention has to be paid to ethics when working with adults as with child research participants (Statement: CR3).

### **5.K Interview summary**

The interview findings show that the participants' comments are linked to four themes from the Q-methodology statements: Children's right to a voice; Ethical policy; Respect autonomy and Non-maleficence. The following statements were chosen from each theme:

1. Children's right to a voice: Statements 2, 3 and 9.
2. Ethical policy: Statements 15, 18, 22, 23, 25, 27 and 28.
3. Respect for autonomy: Statements 31, 35, 36, 37 and 38.
4. Non-maleficence: Statements 51 and 54.

Reviewing the value of these statements in each factor, it can be seen that Statement 27: *It should be compulsory to follow ethical guidelines when conducting research with child participants*, has (+5) in Factors 1 and 2 and (+4) in Factors 4 and 5. Statement 36: *In my view the researcher should obtain consent form both the parents and the child to include a child in research*, has (+5) in Factor 4 and (+4) in Factors 1 and 5. Statement 3: *The same attention to ethics is needed when working with adults as with child research participants*, has (+5) in Factor 1 and (+4) in Factor 2. What is more, Statement 51: *The researcher only has to inform the parents, not the child, about potential risks to their child from participating in the research*, has (+4) in Factor 2. Moreover, Statement 54: *Parents have a right to see the responses of their children in research studies because their child is under age*, has (+5) in Factor 3.

Thus, from the factor arrays of the Q-findings of the statements that have been found, each factor has a high score of between +5 and +4. Thus, it is evident that policymakers have strong beliefs about ethical guidelines and they want them to be compulsory. Furthermore, they see that a consent form should be used and consent obtained from both parents and children when they decide to participate in any research, and the researcher has to pay the same attention, regarding the ethics issue, to child and adult participants alike. On the other hand, policymakers focused on informing only the parents about the risks that might occur during the research process. Further, they agreed with the idea of parents' rights to see their children's answers because they are under age, indicating that they do not have confidence in children's abilities and do not have complete trust in them.

## **5. L Summary**

The chapter has drawn together the details of the analysis process for the Q-methodology sorting with the educational researchers, and has shown the data in a quantitative way through the detailing of the PQMethod results, as well as in a qualitative way through interpretation. Moreover, the interview findings from the policymakers have been presented and linked with the factor perspective findings. The next chapter will discuss the results from each method, Q-methodology and interview, in relation to the literature review and presents the implications.

## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION

#### 6A Introduction

In this chapter, the findings are discussed and linked with the literature. The discussion is based on the results from the educational researchers' Q-methodology sorts and from the interviews with policymakers. Also, the discussion draws comparisons between the educational researchers' and policymakers' perspectives. Finally, the implications of the findings for educational researchers, policymakers, children and parents are presented.

From the Q-analysis the data presented five factors, which explained the participants' viewpoints, relating to Saudi perspectives towards including children in research. These are summarised below according to the results from the crib sheet for each factor (see Appendix 6). I take the highest items ranked in (+5) but for more details see Chapter 5 (section 5.H. Factor Interpretations: Quantitative Summary and Demographic Information p.137)

*Factor 1: The knowledge about children's right to express their voice:* This factor agreed about the importance of giving the children time to decide if they want to participate in research. Also, the participants see that research ethics guidelines have to be followed by adults and children when they decide to participate in research; these guidelines are very important and should be compulsory.

*Factor 2: Acceptance of the concept of ethics:* This factor shows much more concern about the importance of ethics guidelines for children when they participate in research and the guidelines have to be compulsory. Participants believe in children's rights (both genders) to represent their viewpoints.

*Factor 3: Children's voice is unnecessary:* This factor has a different perspective from the other factors; the participants do not have a belief in children's right to a voice because they believe that adults can represent the children's viewpoints and they think children are not a useful source of data. Also they believe in giving the children's parents the power and right to see their children's answers or responses when they participate in research. In their mind it is enough to inform just the parents about the research details.

*Factor 4: Ethical approval and consent by research participants is important:* This view agrees in relation to having an ethical policy, keeping to the ethics guidelines and using consent forms when children participate in research. Children should be given time to decide about their participation in any research and researchers should afford the same attention to the ethics process with both adults and children. Nonetheless, when working with children, it is more important and should be compulsory.

*Factor 5: Belief in children's rights to represent their viewpoints:* Those holding this view have the strong belief that children are able to represent their viewpoints by expressing themselves. This is why they agree to include both genders of children in research in order to express their viewpoints, and this is also easier for the researchers.

Also, from the interview analysis, it was found that the policymakers have strong beliefs about ethical guidelines and they want them to be compulsory; they see that a consent form should be used and consent obtained from both parents and children when they decide to participate in any research; and the researcher has to pay the same attention, regarding the ethics issue, to child and adult participants alike. In addition, the policymakers focused on informing the parents only about the risks that might occur during the research process because they agreed with the idea of parents' rights to see their children's answers because they are under age, indicating that they do not have confidence in children's abilities and do not have complete trust in them.

To attain the findings for this study, I read the results from the Q-analysis five factors, and the findings arising from the analysis of the interviews and identified the similarities and differences between the perspectives of all the participants (the educational researchers and policymakers) based on their responses. Next, I gave each section for the findings a title according to the Q-statements' themes (see Table 2. p.86) and the main idea of the findings. The five key findings for this study are:

1-The need for more childhood and children's rights studies. (The phrase "childhood studies" imply all kinds of children's studies in different fields and from different aspects such as from the fields of psychology, education or health etc. However, the phrase "children's rights studies" refers especially to those studies that focus on children's rights as related to the UNCRRC)

2- The challenges facing researchers when including children as research participants.

- 3- The weak belief pertaining to children's capabilities.
- 4- The low level of awareness of children's participation rights.
- 5- The ethics process in the KSA.

Each of these is discussed in detail later in this chapter, and its origin identified.

## **6B Findings from the viewpoints of the educational researchers and policymakers and how these relate to the literature review**

One of the aims of this research was to identify the perspectives of educational researchers and policymakers relating to the ethics of children's participation in research. In an effort to achieve this aim, the results of the Q-methodology with the educational researchers and the interview with the policymakers are presented by answering the first research question:

*RQ1: What are the perspectives of educational researchers and policymakers towards the ethics of children's participation in research?*

The Q-analysis revealed various viewpoints, reported from the factor interpretations. The research identified five distinct voices; the nature of these was discussed in the previous chapter, the analysis chapter, so further details are not reiterated here. Also, the analysis of the interview presented perspectives reported from the thematic analysis process. This research question was largely answered in the previous chapter through the educational researchers' and policymakers' perspectives towards the ethics of children's participation in research. However, despite there being distinct voices, and that each of these is indicative of a range of perspectives relating to research with children, it was also evident that there was some commonality between some of the voices on certain aspects of the perspectives. These aspects are discussed in this chapter in combination with the literature review in an effort to present a deeper understanding of the research in hand. These aspects have emerged from the factor interpretation and the interview analysis in the analysis chapter.

### ***6.B.1 The need for more childhood and children's rights studies***

This section shows the demographic information and how it links with participants' perspectives by presenting the reasons for the lack of childhood studies according to the educational researchers and policymakers. The relationships between the NCC and

MOE, and the role of the KSA government and their attempts to increase Saudi society's awareness about childhood studies and children's rights issues are also examined.

The perspectives are from 52 female educational researchers (lecturers, assistant professors and professor) at two universities: KSU and PNU. As the results show, the majority were from KSU, specifically from the early childhood school. Also, the interview participants were three policymakers: two from the NCC (a female and a male) and one male from the MOE. All are highly educated: those from the NCC received their degrees within the KSA, the female in the field of education and the male from that of law. The participant from the MOE gained his degree abroad and in the field of education; none of them achieved their qualifications in the early childhood field.

From the educational researchers' demographic information I can see that this perspective emerged because they are not interested in children's issues even if they are from the education department as Participant 26 confirmed through her comment:

*I do not think that children are useful for my field of study.*

This was stated based on her background because she is not from the early childhood school. This illustrates how educational researchers in the KSA, from the education department and not limited to early childhood schools, define children as subjects; this is a similar finding to that of Poyntz *et al.* (2016), about the lack of children and childhood studies, although they can be covered from many aspects. However, although the majority are from the early childhood schools, Participant 26 is an assistant professor with long experience, but has not undertaken research with children (see Table 15: Demographic Data for Factor 3 at section 5.H.3.1 *Demographic Information p.148*). This might be explained by their desire to adopt an easier approach in their research, by not including children, as Policymaker (C) mentioned in regard to the lack of childhood studies in the KSA. This result supports the findings of Bin Said (2007) and Bashatah (2011) concerning the lack of childhood studies in the KSA, and further illustrates the weaknesses in the role of the NCC towards increasing childhood studies. Thus, there is no direct link between the NCC and the research administration, (the department responsible for all topics of research at the MOE), so communication between these administrations may only take place if the topic is about children's rights

or if the participant contacts them personally for any reason. This weak link can be considered as a reason for the lack of childhood studies and children's voice studies in the KSA, as mentioned in the last report provided to the UNCRC. This result also supports the findings of Bin-Said (2007) and Bashatah (2011) in regard to the lack of these studies, and further illustrates that the NCC has not played a significant role in increasing such studies. What is more, it further shows that, so far, the KSA government has not made it a priority to increase the number of these studies. This goes against the claim made by Wall and Dar (2011) that each government needs to find different ways of hearing children's voices. This also suggests that the role of the NCC in Saudi society is unclear. The following statement explains the role of the NCC which is taken from its website: *'The National Commission for Childhood was established to provide a comprehensive, supportive and stimulating umbrella of initiatives for the development and protection of the Saudi child (National Commission for Childhood, 2014)'*. Thus, the NCC is merely a planner, not an applier, as Policymaker (B) mentioned which illustrates that, to date, Saudi society does not know the exact role of the NCC. This implies that the NCC does not present its role clearly. However, the situation is different in some other countries, such as in the UK, where the central role of the Office of the Children's Commissioner is to promote and protect children's rights in England. On the one hand, this does not achieve Roberts' (2008) idea about increasing awareness of children's rights issues, which has to be achieved by the government. On the other hand, this finding is similar to that of MacNaughton *et al.* (2007) who suggest that early childhood professionals face challenges from traditional early childhood experts because of their support for children's rights issues. Also, it matches with Jensen's (2016) finding that, until now, the UNCRC has faced non-acceptance from professionals about implementing children's rights. What is more, Policymaker (A) suggests increasing awareness through the media. Her opinion focuses on the media and agrees with Bashatah (2011), whose findings state that the KSA government still has not used the media effectively in order to increase society's overall awareness about children's rights issues and the UNCRC.

Thus, the findings provide some reasons why there are only a few childhood studies; due to the weak role of the NCC, researchers prefer to use adult participants rather than children, as they consider it difficult working with the latter. Also, it has been shown that the relationship between the NCC and the MOE in the KSA is weak, and that the

role of the NCC is seen as vague by society and researchers because they are just planners not applicers. Also, the media is the first solution that the policymakers suggested to increase society's awareness of children's rights issues.

### ***6.B.2 The challenges facing researchers when including children as research participants***

This section presents some of the difficulties faced by researchers when they decide to use children as participants in research: these include the lack of researchers' knowledge about dealing with children as participants as they see them as incomplete versions of adults; the duty to include children in research is unclear for researchers; and choosing an appropriate method for children and achieving the aim of the research.

For all five factors the educational researchers indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed about giving children an incentive to participate beforehand, which supports the view of O'Reilly *et al.* (2013) and Jensen (2016). All participants agreed that it is the Saudi researcher's attitude when they recruit child participants; most do not have enough knowledge of how to deal with children, and so they make the decision to use incentives to encourage them (Christen & James, 2008; Geldenhuys & Doubell, 2011). Furthermore, all five factors refer to their duty, as educational researchers, to include children in research; however, Factor 3, which considers that giving children a voice is unnecessary, attracts different opinions among the participants. These include disagreement pertaining to the researcher's duty; a lack of belief in the value of including children in research; or lack of agreement on whether children's voices need to be heard. This finding from Factor 3 participants is similar to Groundwater-Smith and Mockler's (2016) finding that, to date, professional knowledge about students' voice issues remains limited. The researcher's own explanation is based on the participants' demographic information as the reason for this perspective, as all of this factor's subjects are not interested in children's issues and are not from early childhood schools. This finding supports the work of Danby and Farrell (2004) and Davis (2007), who state that people still see children as incomplete versions of adults and thus do not understand children's positions. This also agrees with the findings of Christen and James (2008) also Geldenhuys and Doubell, (2011) who claim that researchers still struggle with whether to have children participate in research and thus are not sufficiently prepared to hear children's voices. This finding presents the researcher



participants' opinions about children participating in research. They do not want to have children participate in their projects, not only because they do not know how to deal with them or do not believe in their abilities. Jensen (2016) disagrees with this view about children's abilities, but sometimes the researcher wants the easiest way of implementing their project, as suggested by Policymaker (C). This finding supports Morrow and Richards' (1996) claim concerning the requirements that the researcher has to take into consideration if they decide to have children participate in research. Palaiologou (2014) suggests that researchers face difficulties when including children in their research because they do not know how to deal with them, and they have to focus on choosing an appropriate method to use with them or otherwise choose a method that reflects the nature of the research. Policymaker (C) further suggests that researchers avoid including children in research because they do not know the appropriate research method to use with them. This reflects Gunson *et al.*'s (2016) finding that choosing an appropriate method for children when including them in research is considered one of the researcher's key role. Moreover, Christensen and James (2008) found that, as yet, researchers have been slow to have children participate in research because of the dilemmas regarding methodological issues. However, Beauchamp and Haughton (2012), Christensen and James (2008), and O'Reilly *et al.* (2013) suggest that choosing the best methodology to answer the research question is more important than thinking of the most easy way of accessing the setting, as this will require the researcher to address related ethical questions. Christensen (2004) though, considers that children participating in research will expand the literature in regards to methodology; I also believe that it will fill the gap in Saudi studies and allow researchers to explore new methodologies to use with children. What is more, the perspective of Policymaker (C) illustrates that the researcher has to choose a method to match with their culture, which follows the claim by Punch (2002) that the social culture has to be one factor that researchers take into consideration when they choose their research method.

According to the previous finding concerning the researcher's own duty to include children in research, Factor 4 indicates that, if they do so, it will be based on the decision of their researcher supervisor. This suggests that researchers do not have enough desire to have children participate but if they do so, it is merely in order to satisfy their supervisor. This is in line with the findings of a number of researchers (Danby & Farrell, 2004; Davis, 2007; Christen & James, 2008; Geldenhuys & Doubell,

2011), who claim that researchers lack understanding of children and how to have them participate in research. What is more, this finding is in agreement with Reddy and Ranta (2002) and Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2016), who suggest that having children participate in any project depends on their cultural practices, norms and country context. This is further confirmed by the results from the NCC (2006–2010) that, up to this point, the KSA has not fully implemented Article 12 that, '*Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account*' (The Welsh Government's UNCRC Website, 2011). At the same level, this finding supports Wall and Dar (2011), who indicate that most governments have to find different ways of hearing children's voices. Additionally, Rudduck and Fielding (2006) propose that it is the government's role to offer different ways of helping children to express themselves.

Thus, it is still apparent that most Saudi researchers do not feel confident that they have the appropriate knowledge and skills to include children as participants in their research projects. In addition, their duty as researchers still remains unclear to them, so they recruit children or not, according to their research supervisor's request, which is a strong illustration of how culture influences their perspectives.

### ***6.B.3 The weak belief pertaining to children's capabilities***

This section presents the perspectives of the educational researchers, the policymakers, and Saudi society in general about children's abilities to participate in research and how culture may impact the perspectives of these young participants.

Both the educational researchers and policymakers see children as having limited ability, and culture might impact their opinions. Reddy and Ranta (2002) claim that culture has affected people when they want to have children participate in any research, a view that supports Punch's (2002) suggestion regarding the reasons for accepting children as participants, one being an adult's perspective of children's abilities. Also, Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, (2016) mention that clearly increasing the numbers of children's participation studies is based on the context of the country. Similarly, Kirk (2007) found that, in the past, one reason for not including children in research is the inaccurate belief that the data collected from them would be unreliable, but Moore *et al.* (2016) present different findings about the data collected from children, suggesting that this offers a valued perspective from their experiences. On the other hand, Dockett and

Perry (2007) offer a solution by building a relationship between children and researchers through shared interests, explaining the research idea, and accordingly showing them the data after analysis. As stated above, some researchers do not have sufficient knowledge in dealing with children and would, on the other hand, greatly prefer to deal with adults, as Policymaker (C) stated, supporting the findings of Christen and James (2008), who suggest that researchers have been slow to have children participate in their research. Furthermore, James and James (2008) comment that, to date, researchers have preferred adult participants over children as a result of their belief that children lack the ability to participate in research. This claim also supports Punch's (2002) findings about people's acceptance of children's participation - it could be their perspectives of children's abilities, as Factors 1, 2 and 5 presented. In addition, this low agreement shows that some researchers still think in traditional ways; they see children as incomplete versions of adults (Danby & Ferrell, 2004) thus, they do not want to include them in research. None of the previous perspectives though support the view held by Cook and Hess (2007) and Moore *et al.* (2016) that the inclusion of children in research shows unexpected findings because no one can understand children more than they can themselves. However, this fact is not limited to Arabic countries, such as the KSA for example, because Wall and Dar (2011) argue as to whether children should have their own parliament or whether an adult parliament can express children's viewpoints. Their conclusion was that it is not necessary for children to have a separate parliament. This perspective is in contrast with MacNaughton *et al.* (2007), who view that children can provide a clear explanation about the world and their position in that world, from their perspective, and they see the world in a way that differs from adults' views. Also, Ruiz-Casares and Thompson (2016) agree with MacNaughton *et al.*'s (2007) finding that children are the best at expressing themselves.

This particular finding reveals the preference of educational researchers to include adults in research, rather than children, because they tend to be more relaxed and mature. Also, the finding shows the power of culture and how it influences the participants' perspectives about children's abilities, which is arguably a result of the lack of studies on children and childhood.

#### ***6.B.4 The low level of awareness of children's participation rights in research***

The section is considered the main finding for this research. It states the importance of the children's right to have their voices heard by participating in research and how this right encounters obstacles, not only in Saudi society but also overseas. Also, it explicates the reasons to not include them in research and presents the perspectives of the participants (the educational researchers and policymakers) towards the gender issue, for children, when they are recruited to participate in research.

The results reveal the similarities between the Q-participants' factors, which show that all participants from all factors, with the exception of Factor 3, are familiar with the 'children's right to a voice' concept. This is in line with Harker (2002) and Rudduck and Fielding (2006) concerning the importance of hearing children's voices, which is an emerging strand and considered as an enquiry into children's lives. On the same level, all policymakers believed in the importance of the children's voices being heard when having them participate in research. This finding is in line with that of a number of researchers (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013; Moore *et al.*, 2016; Ruiz-Casares & Thompson, 2016) that when children participate in research they represent themselves and express their views. Moreover, James (2007) discussed the vital role of children's voices in research and how this has spread widely and become a powerful finding in social science research. Hadley *et al.* (2008) consider that listening to a child's voice directly from the child himself or herself is recognised as a vital step. In addition, Participant 41 commented on this issue:

*The children's rights concept is not just clear for me as a concept, I have become obsessed with it.*

However, this concept is not clear among Factor 3 participants, who show a lack of understanding regarding the children's right to a voice concept. James and James (2008) found that, until the late 1970s, the children's voice concept was unheard of amongst academic researchers, yet children still face obstacles in promoting their voice today, as Geldenhuys and Doubell (2011) found. Nevertheless, Geldenhuys and Doubell (2011) are optimistic that researchers offer attempts at improving children's participation and accordingly listening to their voice.

Factor 3 participants expressed a low level of agreement about children participating in research and allowing the hearing of their viewpoints, which indicates that they do not have enough knowledge about children's rights articles, not only about the concept but in general. This result supports the conclusion drawn by Reddy and Ranta (2002) that children's rights to participate and the opportunities, in reality, are uncommon but against Määttä and Aaltonen's (2016) finding that including children as participants in numerous activities is common. Moreover, Factor 3 participants do not have a clear image about the key aim regarding children participating; it is not just to hear children's voices or allow them to express themselves, but rather it is also about building relationships between children themselves, between children and adults, and accordingly sharing their perspectives in order to obtain a clear image about children's worlds and presenting their position in society (Kyronlampi-Kylmanen & Maatta, 2011; Ghirotto & Mazzoni, 2013; O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013; Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2014-2015 ; Määttä & Aaltonen, 2016; Moore *et al.*, 2016; Ruiz-Casares & Thompson, 2016). This perspective reflects the calls from James and James (2008) and Edwards and Alldred (1999) for the need to pay more attention to children's participation issues because on this point there is a belief about children's lack of ability. Furthermore, this finding matches with the results of the interviews regarding children's participation in research. One reason could be the need to choose an appropriate methodology, as Grover (2004) and Gunson *et al.* (2016) mention, that allows children to have their voice heard, affords them their rights, and further helps the researcher to choose an appropriate methodology for the project. What is more, having children participate in research is considered as an attempt to implement Article 12 (*when adults are making decisions that may have an effect on them and/or their lifestyle, children have the right to say what they think should happen, in addition to having their opinions taken into account*) and Article 13 (*children have the right to get and to share information as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others*) from the UNCRC (Cocks, 2006; Morrow, 2008; Roberts, 2008; Mukherji & Albon, 2011). Mayne *et al.* (2016) agreed with the list above about implementing Article 12 and Article 13, when children participate in research, and added two further articles - Article 2: (*The convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say and whatever type of family they come from*) and Article 3: (*All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best*

*for each child*). These could be implemented through children's participation in research. Opinions relating to the challenges researchers face when deciding to hear children's voices illustrates that there are still attempts from researchers to do so. However, the present study's findings disagree with the debate posed by James and James (2008) about listening to children's voices; this does not mean they will be taken into account by adults.

According to the low levels of agreement towards children participating in research, some factors indicate a participation step process whereas others do not, for example, Factor 5 participants considered that it is not a child's right to be given explanations about the research steps in order to decide whether or not they want to participate. Further, Factor 2 participants did not recognise the importance of informing children in research, and that it would not help them in their participation decision. This illustrates that the level of understanding about the children's research participation process is considered low by Factor 5 and Factor 2 participants, and that they do not have enough knowledge about the principle of 'respect for autonomy' from the ethics principles. As Participant 44 mentioned:

*However, the consent of children is important, but without explaining all research details to children.*

Notably, this disagrees with the comment of Participant 17:

*A child can comprehend the research plan if explained in a method that suits his/her understanding.*

Further, Participant 12, who has the same opinion about children's levels of understanding, states that:

*Discussing the risks with children would make them scared, or overreact.*

All the above comments suggest that the researchers considered that the process would be too complex for children to understand, and that it is not important for the children to know the details of the research.

These perspectives do not fully support the views of O'Reilly *et al.* (2013) and Moore *et al.* (2016) that the researchers' role with children is to be honest with them and explain all research processes. In contrast, although the participants did not have strong views about children's participation in research, nonetheless they did see it as necessary to give them time to decide whether they want to participate in any project. This supports

the view of O'Reilly *et al.* (2013) in regard to children's right to participate, a view that strongly supports the comment of Participant 42:

*I have good educational experience with regard to childhood characteristics that show the child's ability to make decisions. Therefore, children are free to decide whether to participate or not.*

In addition, Factor 3 was the only factor to identify children's right to withdraw from the participation process, even if they and their parents have consented it is still their right. This is in agreement with the perspective adopted by O'Reilly *et al.* (2013) and McGlone (2016) in relation to children's right to withdraw and to accept or refuse the researcher's request to participate in the project. The Factor 3 perspective however, does not represent Saudi culture in relation to children participating in research because most children are forced to participate, as Participant 18 mentioned:

*From my own experience in field work with children, they never refuse to participate because they are obliged by the school to participate.*

This could be explained through the consideration that Saudi society does not fully understand the participation process, which may be influenced by culture (Reddy & Ranta, 2002; Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2016; Mayne *et al.*, 2016). This comment demonstrates Saudi culture that when students deal with teachers in the classroom the students must respect their teacher's orders, even if they remain unconvinced. If the child is that unconvinced, this might result in the truancy of some children from their school because they do not want to participate, as Määttä and Aaltonen (2016) found.

It is worth mentioning that many countries have similar perspectives about children's rights to participate in research. South Africa (Geldenhuys & Doubell, 2011) and Turkey (Monti, 2008) for example, still have low levels of awareness about children's participation rights, although they have made some attempts to address this (Lyon, 2007). There is also the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in Europe which is considered as "an extremely useful 'legal rights' supplement to the more 'aspirational rights' conferred by the UNCRC" (Lyon, 2007, p.109) has the same result of the low level of awareness about children's rights participation. For example, in 2003, the UK awareness of the ECHR was low as reported by Fielding and Bragg (2003), although awareness was increasing by 2011 as a result of the Governance Fit for Children project (2011). Elsewhere, the same results are evident regarding the low level of children's rights awareness, and particularly children's participation, for example,

Middle East countries, such as Tunisia, Sudan, Somalia, Palestine, Qatar, Libya, Egypt and Yemen, which have all been involved in the initiatives of the Arab Council for Childhood and Development (2011). Furthermore, in Jordan the UNICEF report (2007) found similar result, with the same found in the KSA, as Bashatah (2011) and Qtran (2015) identified. However, the limited agreement over participation rights opposes the Saudi government's role to improve the country's overall awareness about children's rights issues, as requested by the UNCRC, and to achieve the aims of the UNCRC (Lyon, 2007; Roberts, 2008; Meehan, 2015). The NCC website (2014) highlights the Saudi government's role in providing a report every five years to show how they are implementing the articles of the UNCRC (Bin-Said, 2007; Payne, 2009; Libal *et al.*, 2011).

What is more, the issue of gender when involving children in research emerged from the educational researcher participants. Factors 1, 2, 4 and 5 participants agreed about capturing the experiences from children of different gender, age, etc. This perspective is similar to the findings of Ruiz-Casares and Thompson (2016) that the diversity of capturing children's experiences will contribute to improving our understanding, as researchers, of children in the research context. Factor 3 participants on the other hand, disagreed with this perspective on the grounds that it will not achieve the principle of justice and equality between children. However, Factors 1, 2, 3 and 5 participants also preferred to capture the voices from both genders (with the exclusion of Factor 4). This finding reinforces the third and fourth reports, provided by the KSA to the UNCRC, which is that the government still has not paid adequate attention to implementing Article 12, particularly with girls who can only express their viewpoints within their families (National Commission for Childhood, 2006–2010). What is more, there have been some attempts by various associations to allow both boy and girl children to express themselves, such as the 'AFLATON' programme (Child Care Association) and the 'Ted Kid' event held in Riyadh in 2015. Unfortunately, however, the government does not support such events; although civil society organisations do. This shows that there is no link between the NCC and other private institutions, as Policymaker (A) mentioned. What is more, Factor 3 participants see that children's enjoyment in research is not the aim of educational researchers; they have them participate to collect their data, in line with Jensen's (2016, p.1) comment that: '*Researchers often use children as*



*informers or deliverers of data...*' . This goes against the view of Participant 19 when she said:

*It is difficult to evaluate how beneficial most of the research studies are without actually applying them on children.*

However, Participant 15 commented:

*I will not be involving children only because they are a source of information, but also because the findings will help them and help society in general. Getting them involved for my benefit only is selfish.*

In the end this all illustrates that to date, worldwide, there is low awareness about children's right to participate. There are a number of reasons why this could be the case: the researchers' perspectives about children's abilities when they participate in research; the lack of knowledge among researchers about the world of children, children's needs, and how they can participate in research. For example, the belief that children will not understand the research steps so the researcher will not explain the process to them. Also, the culture of any society will affect children's choice to participate in research - for example, Saudi children consider their teacher's request for them to participate in any project as an order so they have to do it even if they do not want to. What is more, KSA society still has an equity issue between genders so girls' voices attract lower levels of response than those of boys.

### ***6.B.5 The ethics process in the KSA***

This section presents the participants' perspectives about ethics as a concept, the advantages of research ethics, and the importance of ethical guidelines and consent forms. It also reflects their perspectives about parental permission when their children participate in research and their needs for a training course to improve their knowledge about ethics and how to use these as guidelines with children and adults.

It is worth mentioning that all factors agree that the following ethical guidelines should be compulsory, as Participant 34 mentioned:

*I strongly believe that research ethics should be obligatory, especially when children participate because most people do not care about this issue and take it for granted because the participant is 'just a child' so why take his/her consent!*

Also, all policymakers (A, B and C) were in strong agreement about ethical guidelines when children participate in research, but they reported the need to empower parents in the process by giving them the right to see their children's answers. However, the factor

participants did agree that consent forms protect and respect research participants, which is in disagreement with Alderson and Morrow (2011). This illustrates the fact that the participants do not know and/or understand the exact role of ethics as a concept, or ethics guidelines usage in research, in addition to their related advantages (Punch, 2002; Flewitt, 2005; O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013). According to the previous finding, there was also strong agreement from the policymakers that ethics will respect children and protect them if ethics guidelines are implemented alongside consent forms. This perspective agrees with Mayne *et al.* (2016), that today the concept of ethics applying to children has increased quickly, although researchers have not established a special code of ethics just for children. Also, this is in agreement with Ismail's (2009) definition about ethics, which is about respecting others' rights and perspectives, whether researchers or participants in the research. Also, it supports O'Reilly *et al.* (2013) in their opinion that ethics will be an instrument of protection, for participants, ensuring safeguarding from any harm or risk, which should be regarded as an important condition in the ethics issue. Thus, these perspectives are positive; there is agreement with the procedure but nonetheless participants still lack knowledge about the aim of this procedure, particularly those from Factors 2 and 3. This corresponds with the findings of Al-Giesie *et al.* (2001) and Al-Otaibi (2000) concerning the lack of ethics awareness in Arabic countries. In this vein, Participant 27 also had the same opinion, mentioning:

*I believe that we should be taking the issue of research ethics seriously as we, in the Arab World, are taking this issue for granted that we are reluctant to inform the participant that he/she is used as a sample in a specific research.*

Participants believed in having ethics forms to help them plan their fieldwork, which supports the claim of Moore *et al.* (2016) that the researcher has to have a plan for the children who will participate in their research and the views of O'Reilly *et al.* (2013) who see that ethics forms help researchers to organise projects. What is more, all factor participants identified a strong perspective towards the importance of affording the same attention to the ethics issue whether it is children or adults who participate in research, which is in line with Kirk (2007). However, Factor 5 participants considered giving more attention to adult participants as more important, which goes against the claim made by Mukherji and Albon (2011) in regard to giving more attention to children because of their age and vulnerability. On the same level, policymakers agreed with the importance of ethics guidelines in general, but Policymaker (A) believed it to

be more important in science research than in social science research. This finding is in line with the explanation provided by Al-frejat (2011) that this view might have emerged because ethics has its roots in medical research (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013). However, Mukherji and Albon (2011) consider that ethics are important for any kind of research, which is more logical because science and social science research are considered the same in that they both undertake research with human subjects.

In addition, the policymakers believed that achieving consent from parents is enough. This supports the views of Shaw *et al.* (2011) and O'Reilly *et al.* (2013) about involving parents in the process; however, it goes against the stance taken by Alderson and Morrow (2011) and Mayne *et al.* (2016), who believe that consent has to be both from parents and from children. However, O'Reilly *et al.* (2013) stress that, if the parents are unavailable for any reason, it is the child's right to decide about their participation. What is more, all factor participants demonstrated similar opinions about obtaining consent forms from children and their parents when children participate, which is in line with a number of researchers (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Shaw *et al.*, 2011; O'Reilly *et al.*, 2013) and further supports the opinion of Participant 11:

*Even in the case of the parent's consent the child must also be asked for his consent as he /she is the one to participate, not the parents.*

However, Factor 3 participants took a different perspective, in that having parents' permission for their children's participation is enough. Also, the policymakers' perspectives, which could have been influenced by Saudi culture about including parents in the participation process of their children in research, depended on their perspective about the lack of children's abilities. Hart (1994) considers that parents' opinions to allow their children to participate in research may differ from parent to parent, depending on their nationality and philosophy. Also, Serour (2015) sees that ethics differ from society to society. This perspective goes against the children's right to participate as Article 12 sets out: *When adults are making decisions that may have an effect on them and/or their lifestyle, children have the right to say what they think should happen, in addition to having their opinions taken into account.* In this respect, participants' comments, from different factors, support this perspective, for example Participant 27 believed that even when obtaining consent from children, the researcher has to respect the parents' decisions, as she commented:

*Although, in my opinion a child has the right to be a decision maker, I strongly believe as well in the final role of the parents in making the decision, as they are the ones responsible for their child.*

This is confirmed by the opinion of Participant 19:

*Taking the parent's permission is one of the most significant research ethics.*

Moreover, Participant 34 also commented:

*In my opinion, the child's consent is not as obligatory as the parent's, because a child may not fully comprehend what a research is and thus will be confused with the terms.*

Participant 9 however, believed that consent could be obtained from anyone who is responsible for the child if it is difficult to reach the parents. These participants, some of whom have studied abroad, are therefore likely to have knowledge about consent forms but still their culture may impact their perspectives. This illustrates that they used the consent forms just because it was a requirement from their western universities, when they were studying, not because they necessarily believed in the ethics process. What is more, Policymakers (A) and (C) were very interested in making ethics guidelines and consent forms compulsory in the KSA, which is in line with the opinion held by Mukherji and Albon (2011) regarding the importance of ethical issues. This opinion opposes that of Roberts (2008), who states that guidelines for research are not always in agreement and that, until now, there has been much international debate about ethics guidelines. Thus, even some western countries might not have ethics guidelines in place. Interestingly, Policymaker (A) suggested that people who study abroad have a greater level of awareness of, and background to creating, ethics guidelines.

Among the educational researchers (those who studied in the KSA), although the places that they earned their degrees from believe in children's right to express their voice, this belief is not strong enough to ensure a commitment because these participants still give the power of decision to parents or any other gatekeeper (Mukherji & Albon, 2011). What is more, the result of the last UNCRC report from the KSA (2006–2010) confirms the finding that the government should focus more on Article 12, which states: '*When adults are making decisions that may have an effect on them and/or their lifestyle, children have the right to say what they think should happen, in addition to having their opinions taken into account*'. Thus, this perspective illustrates that there is a gap between the meaning of the Article and how the researchers understand it.

All the factor participants expressed a desire to have special training courses about research ethics, and they considered it necessary for these to be provided in the KSA.

As Participant 35 mentioned:

*They should offer this kind of course because of the lack of awareness about the importance of the research.*

Furthermore, Participant 7 said:

*We need this kind of course so that researchers can come to a better understanding of the proper ways of dealing with participants, whether they are children or adults.*

This finding is similar to what O'Reilly *et al.* (2013) mentioned about training courses in the USA. Although Factor 3 participants however accepted the importance of training courses, they believed that it is not the university's responsibility to provide such courses. This is in disagreement with the comment of Participant 35, who stated:

*Universities should offer this kind of course because of the lack of awareness about the importance of the research.*

This finding suggests on one hand the acceptance by Saudi society of ethics as a concept and how they want to know more about it. Also, it shows their desire for ethics to be part of the compulsory process for adults and children when participating in research by having training courses to increase their knowledge. On the other hand, findings show that ethics as a concept and the ethics role for the Saudi participants remains unclear, although some had learned about it from western countries. This illustrates how the power of culture is stronger than participants' education, because participants who were awarded their degrees abroad still considered that adults' permission for children's participation is adequate.

### **6.C Comparison of the educational researchers' and policymakers' perspectives towards the ethics of children's participation in research**

From the educational researchers and policymakers, viewpoints have been identified concerning ethics when children participate in research. Although different methods have been used to collect the data (Q-methodology with the educational researchers and interviews with the policymakers), the findings present both similar and different perspectives among the two groups.

Both groups of research participants (educational researchers and policymakers) have the same perspective about the level of childhood studies in the KSA, however to this point there has been a lack of such studies. Both groups of participants acknowledged that the main reason for this lack is due to the fact that researchers want an easier way to undertake research. The educational researchers see that this avoidance of children is because researchers, to date, have not acquired enough knowledge of how to deal with children. They need further training and skilling up in developing a wider repertoire of an approach to use when they work with children for research purpose. Importantly, policymakers considered that the reason for not having children participate in research is not only because they do not know how to deal with them but also they want to follow the easiest route when doing their research. Also, they do not know the appropriate method that will match with children, as participants, and at the same time achieve their project aim. What is more, one of the policymakers mentioned that researchers have to choose an appropriate method for use with children, and it has to be acceptable within Saudi culture. For example some researchers could adopt a method from a western model, without any modification, to be appropriate within Saudi culture, consequently, she/he would not need to seek permission to proceed with their research. In addition, both participant groups considered children as incomplete versions of adults, and thus with limited ability. This perspective is clear from their comments, such as *'children are under age, so they cannot understand the research processes'*. However, policymakers identified reasons for the lack of inclusion of children in research that the educational researchers did not mention, which is the weak link between the NCC and the research administration at the MOE, and between the NCC and other private institutions.

Regarding children's participation rights, both groups had similar perspectives towards children's participation in research, but they had different perspectives about the aim of this participation. Policymakers considered children's participation in research as allowing their voices to be heard, whilst educational researchers had low agreement towards listening to children's voices and instead believed that including children in research is a duty for them. The educational researchers adopted this perspective, although all the participants' factors (with the exception of Factor 3) were familiar with the 'children's rights to a voice' concept.

Along the same lines, both groups held the same perspective about the ethics issue. They agreed that ethical guidelines have to be compulsory and have to be applicable to both children and adults who participate in research. What is more, both groups agreed with the idea of obtaining consent, which has to be from both children and parents when children participate. However, they also considered that if the researcher has consent from parents about their children's participation, this will be adequate. Thus, both groups more often gave the power in children's participation decisions to the parents rather than to the children. However, a point of difference is that the policymakers see that the ethics guidelines are more important in science research than social science research. Whilst the educational researchers are aware that they lack knowledge about the aim of ethics, they agreed with the need for training courses to increase their knowledge.

#### **6.D Implications of the findings**

In this section, I show the key implications that emerged from the findings, which can be considered as solutions for the findings. The findings are: Saudi society needs more childhood studies; Saudis have an unclear idea about children's capabilities; they have different perspectives towards children's participation rights; and they believe in ethics as a concept but are still vague about how to use it as guidelines in the research process. These implications are distributed among all the members who take part in any participation process: the educational researcher who is doing the project; children who are the main people who will express themselves and help the researcher to collect data; the parents who give permission for their children to participate and help the researcher to explain the project to their children; and the policymakers who should supervise the process, by giving all members permission to complete the process. People generally do not tend to venture towards any unknown and new process in their life—unless they know the risk associated with the process— (Fullan & Miles, 1992). These implications are pivotal in helping people change their perspective,; however any new thing or way of life presented to any society is generally not accepted easily. The public shows reluctance from the beginning; this resistance materialises from their fears, which generally consist of possibilities that the new 'thing' will conflict with their traditions, that there is a lack of training, or that the result may be loss of their identity (Al-Sowayegh, 2012). Also, this fear among people delays the change from occurring (Fullan & Miles, 1992) and could be due to people's beliefs that emerge from their

culture; this is because any society has a specific culture which forms their attitudes, reactions and beliefs (Adler & Jelinek, 1986).

To implement the change process successfully, people have to realise that change happens by learning, and also that learning includes understanding new and valuable knowledge (Fullan & Miles, 1992). For this reason, it is suggested that the implications discussed below should match with Saudi culture - whether *social* culture, as children who participate in research and their parents, or *organisational* culture, as the educational researchers who work at universities and policymakers who work with the government. However, Adler and Jelinek (1986) mention that the organisation members are sometimes isolated from the culture around them; although the term ‘culture’ has been defined from different aspects. Fang *et al.* (2013, p.161) found that ‘*culture, in essence, nurtures people’s minds and shapes their behaviour*’ and, according to ‘*change*’ and ‘*culture*’ concepts, while Adler and Jelinek (1986, pp.85-86) reflected that:

*culture itself is indeed subject to change, but typically any single individual is relatively powerless to affect culture. Culture changes, but only slowly as the cumulative result of many individuals’ changes. Culture is not fixed, but neither is it infinitely or immediately malleable.*

These definitions helped me to identify the implications that apply to the four member groups – educational researchers, parents, children, and policymakers – who take part in the research. This answers the second research question:

*RQ2: What lessons emerge about the ethics of children’s participation in research for the educational researchers, policymakers, children and children’s parents?*

#### ***6.D.1 Implications for educational researchers towards the ethics of children’s participation in research***

The main implication for the application of ethics to research with children is centred on increasing the awareness of this group (educational researchers) about the children’s rights issue, and focuses on the ethics concept for children and adults. These implications are directed towards a group of workers at organisations, in this case the universities. There is however, a question that remains: What is the definition of an organisation’s culture? An organisational culture can be recognised as ‘*a widely-acclaimed metaphor for understanding how organisations differ, how their members*



*cohere, and how organisations and members interact*' (Alder & Jelinek, 1986, p. 81). Groups have a specific organisational culture, which emerge from their diversity of beliefs, ideas, and norms, as Al-Sowayegh (2012) found from her study. This guided me to identify national culture, and to focus on the work of Hofstede, as Al-Sowayegh (2012) mentioned, who claims that, by definition, when referring to a national culture we are 'culturally' differentiating the members of one country or nation from another. Further, Hofstede defined the culture as "the collective programming of the mind distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from other" (Hofstede et.al.2012,p.6) also he claims that cultural differences can be identified between the members of a specific nation or culture; however he also contends that despite these differences, a unique culture is present in each nation or population – in other words, national culture is both *separatory* and *unifactory* (McSweeney, 2002, p.92). Hofstede further draws the distinction between the national culture of a country or state, which is not necessarily that of the nation. For example, although the UK is made up of four separate countries/nations, collectively it is treated as having a single, national, culture (McSweeney, 2002) whilst Al-Sowayegh (2012, p.61) found that national culture '*is the collection of beliefs, values, norms and experiences that are gained from infancy by a group of individuals who share and use them in a particular context*'. On the other hand, Alder and Jelinek (1986, p.74) mention that: '*culture and weather—organisational or national—are frequently defined as a set of taken-for-granted assumptions, or rules for being in the world*'. In the light of all these definitions, I intend to show the implications for educational researchers, as a group, concerning their beliefs in the need for ethics when children participate in research in KSA culture.

In this respect, the KSA government and universities should explain the importance of ethics in research for participants and researchers, which should clarify the advantages of using consent forms and how they will protect and respect both researchers and participants. The process of including ethics as a process in research with children needs to be embedded within the universities. They can also achieve this by running training courses from their institution concerning why and how children participate in research and what the advantages of their inclusion are for the researchers, children and society. In addition, as most educational researchers requested, the research centre at each university has to run training courses that include explanations for how children are considered social actors in society, and by implication why their issues have to receive

the same level of attention as those of adults. Such training courses have to be offered to all educational researchers who are in the education department, and not solely limited to early childhood researchers. This implication is suggested as the solution for findings *6.b.3- The weak belief pertaining to children's capabilities* and *6.b.4- The low level of awareness of children's participation right*. By improving educational researchers' awareness of findings 6.b.3 and 6.b.4 will increase the number of children and childhood studies and as a result support finding *6.b.1- The need for more childhood and children's right studies*.

In order to achieve such types of training course, as an example the process at KSU of how they deliver a training course is presented next. The system is that the research centre, for the department, sends for the faculty members from each school if they desire to provide any course for the university members. Moreover, they also collect members' suggestions through surveys that they present at the end of each workshop. A survey in these cases is considered effective and provides much information in a short time (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). The research centre asks members about their needs for any course or workshop about any subject. Subsequently, the research centre collects all the suggestions and accordingly searches for an appropriate member (lecturer, assistant professor, etc.), who has knowledge of the subject, to deliver the course. What is more, sometimes, if the researcher has a new idea for any course, she/he can submit a proposal about the course to the research centre where it is discussed at committee level. If the content of the course is approved, the researcher is given permission to run it, however training courses are not only presented from the research centre. They are also on offer from the Deanship of Scientific Research, Deanship of Skills Development, Graduate Studies Committee, Graduate Studies meetings, and some from the schools of any departments, these courses are considered as individual efforts from the faculty members, based on their needs.

Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006) mention some factors for consideration when contemplating the implementation of a training course, one being to define participants' needs. The findings of the Q-sort indicated what most of the researchers asked to have training available. In addition, faculty numbers who work in the university should take care of their members by providing courses and workshops to give them the opportunity to improve themselves, their skills, and their knowledge about any subject (Al-Ghadyan, 2004). An example of how training courses can change Saudi attitudes and

influence society is shown by Al-Ghadyan (2004, p. 264) through the experience of how a Saudi community accepted the concepts of e-learning and the use of the internet:

*The health sector in Saudi Arabia, such as the King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre (KFSHRC), follows the new Changes in communications and is developing Electronic medicine. In the field of electronic commerce, the experts expect new governmental rules to encourage it. They anticipate more banking services through the internet.*

This example points out how the advantages of training courses that encourage and present new ideas and concepts can change people's beliefs. As Zhu and Engels (2014, p.139) mention: *'the process of change is complex, with many different types of change possible and many influencing factors. Within each level of educational endeavour, there often exists the possibility of improvement'*. Also, changing an organisation's culture demonstrates the level of the conscious decision of management for the direction they intend for this organisation. As an example, managers who believe in the benefits of training and how it will bring about positive change and improvement among their employees will emphasise the value of training courses (Alder & Jelinek 1986). When they want to evaluate their plans nowadays, managers focus on the benefits and how they will get payoffs from the change, whilst in the past they evaluated their plans based on their culture and societal customs and traditions (Alder & Jelinek, 1986).

In addition, universities should design a unit to be taught to all education department students about how to have children participate in research ethically. The unit has to be about the children's rights concept, children's participation rights, such as children's decisions to participate in research, and about ethics related to undertaking research with children as participants. By providing insights into how the researcher should deal with children when participating in research, such a unit must also emphasise the researcher's duty towards children's participation. Additionally, the most suitable method must be established, depending on the research topic and children's ages and needs. This will support the implication of findings 6.b.2- *The challenges facing researchers when including children as research participants*, 6.b.3- *The weak belief pertaining to children's capabilities*, and 6.b.4- *The low level of awareness of children's participation right*. Further, the unit has to include guidelines about the parents' role in the participation process and accordingly present other countries' experiences in order to benefit from such hindsight. In addition, the unit has to focus on children's participation in research from the perspective of how this could help them to express

themselves and allow their voices to be heard, and as a result increase the numbers of childhood studies and ethics studies, which supports finding *6.b.1- The need for more childhood and children's right studies*, and *6.b.5- The ethics process in the KSA*, because currently, the KSA faces a lack of such studies. This step will activate Article 12 (*when adults are making decisions that may have an effect on them and/or their lifestyle, children have the right to say what they think should happen, in addition to having their opinions taken into account*) and Article 13 (*children have the right to get and to share information as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others*). The implementation of Article 12 was identified as limited in the last report from the KSA government to the UNCRC (see Chapter 3 section *3.c.4: Overview of Children's Participation in the Middle East [Implementing Articles 12–13 of the UNCRC]* p.46).

Each university should organise an ethics committee to create the ethics forms and set out the conditions for such forms, which will address the participant's wishes for finding *6.b.5- The ethics process in the KSA*". Moreover, this ethics committee will help researchers to answer questions about ethics issues, as it will be a new procedure in the KSA. What is more, the committee has to make the concept of research ethics compulsory, and any research proposal applications that lack ethics procedures will not be given permission by this committee to proceed. However, one of the greatest challenges for any institution is finding a way to create a new culture to support innovation (Zhu & Engels, 2014) as Al-Ghadyan (2004, p. 264) found that:

*The fact that Saudi employees in the public sector are not generally encouraged to train is true: this is an example of a feature of bad management of planning. That is one thing, but there is something more complex behind it: a cultural attitude that does not encourage people to think ahead or to be strategic in their thinking.*

This means that any organisational change relating to the culture of ethics in research needs to take the national culture into account.

#### ***6.D.2 Implications for parents about ethics when they decide to let their children participate in research***

This group, the parents, who have a hidden role in the participation process, should be made aware of their role by the academic community. Researchers have to increase parents' awareness about children's rights, as an issue, and accordingly focus on the

participation right to support the finding *6.b.4- The low level of awareness of children's participation rights*. A large component of human beliefs and/or behaviours is controlled by the individual themselves, researchers also have to take into consideration the fact that parents may have different cultures from their own (Alder & Jelinek, 1986). The researcher can address this by offering a session for the parents, prior to the initiation of the project, to explain the aim of the project, their role in the process, their children's role, and the risks, if any, that the child might face as a result of participation. Also, researchers can present a free session about the different types of children's participation, how parents can allow their children to give their voices concerning their participation in any project, and accordingly explain the importance of their children's participation and how their children might benefit and improve their skills and personality as a result. What is more, researchers should encourage parents to give suggestions about how to deal with their children and thereby identify any concerns about them. Furthermore, they also have to teach the parents how to fill in consent forms with their children, by providing previous examples from others. In addition, the researcher should give parents some ideas or practice games that they can apply with their children to obtain their consent; parents should not just sign without their children's permission. These suggestions could be a solution for findings *6.b.4- The low level of awareness of children's participation rights* and *6.b.5- The ethics process in the KSA*.

### ***6.D.3 Implications for children about their participation in research***

Children are the main members in the participation process; thus, the researcher has to give them more attention, more so than other members. However, researchers should explain to children, in detail, their rights, their obligations and any risks involved in the participation process to support findings *6.b.2- The challenges facing researchers when including children as research participants* and *6.b.5- The ethics process in the KSA*. This could be achieved by having a relevantly focused informal chat with them to introduce himself or herself, and to explain to them the project aim and the risks they might face in their role as participants in the project. Also, they can arrange a focus group with children to allow them to ask any questions about the research, express their perspectives about the project, and accordingly ask them to provide suggestions for the research, the method, and their participation. What is more, they can also explain to them the ethics process, consent forms and ethical guidelines in the research process and

what their role and obligations concerning this process are, as well as their parents' and researchers' roles, rights and obligations. Furthermore, the government has to increase children's awareness about the children's rights concept and the UNCRC by identifying the role of the UNCRC and how this organisation takes care of them in different ways. Such awareness-raising could be carried out by the media, such as through producing TV programmes, creating internet websites about the UNCRC and showing the articles in a simple way that reflects the children's abilities and understanding. This will provide support for findings *6.b.2- The challenges facing researchers when including children's as research participants* and *6.b.4- The low level of awareness of children's participation rights*.

The most important consideration is centred on communicating with children, at the right level of understanding, in order for them to be suitably informed about their rights when participating in the research process. Certain approaches can be taken, such as creating applications, as all children nowadays benefit from the internet and learn from it; encouraging children to participate in research by presenting previous experience of children's participation in projects, and showing how they can express themselves and benefit from their participation. In addition, children can be encouraged by being shown films or reading stories about children who have participated in research, which will show reflections of their own feelings. Such approaches can improve children's confidence, identify their rights, and accordingly encourage them to know that society respects them as social actors within their society.

#### ***6.D.4 Implications for policymakers towards the ethics of children's participation in research***

This section presents the government's role through the perspective of some policymakers, the implication being that this applies to the KSA government. The government has to set rules for researchers to use as ethics guidelines with all research participants, whether adults or children. The government has to take action regarding the use of ethics forms and make them compulsory, particularly for children. The government should mandate each university to set up an ethics committee; send them ethics requirements with main sections and then allow them to create and tailor their own format appropriate to their needs. However, the government has to consider the fact that each university has its own organisational culture and thus has to respect these

differences (Alder & Jelinek, 1986). These suggestions offer supportive solutions to increasing society's awareness about ethics and support finding *6.b.5- The ethics process in the KSA*.

What is more, the government should encourage researchers to have children participate in their research because this will increase the numbers of studies currently available regarding Saudi children and childhood in order to fill the existing research gap. This could be achieved by presenting sessions relating to the importance of such studies and further show the results of the last report submitted for the UNCRC and how the KSA still has limitations in this area. This will increase the number of childhood studies in the KSA which will support finding *6.b.1- The need for more childhood and children's rights studies*.

In addition, the NCC should increase its role in raising society's awareness about the children's rights concept and the UNCRC through a number of ways, including the media and education, among others. What is more, the MOE should introduce the children's rights concept to the school curricula - this will support finding *6.b.4- The low level of awareness of children's participation right*. Furthermore, the MOE needs to create an ethics committee, comprising professional groups of educational researchers, and adopt the responsibility and role of making decisions regarding permission for researchers to undertake their research. Moreover, creating a database of education studies will illustrate the lack of studies in areas such as children and childhood. More generally, the government should direct attention to children's celebrations, such as the 'TED Kid' event, as such events support children's rights to express themselves through their participation, which will achieve Article 12 and Article 13 of the UNCRC, as mentioned in section *6.e.1- Implications for educational researchers towards the ethics of children's participation in research* above. The government also should set directives that any children's events or initiatives have to fall under the umbrella of the NCC. Thus, in the light of the findings from this current research, as a researcher, I am encouraged to conduct further studies about children and ethics issues because I recognise the lack of such studies in the KSA, which will support findings *6.b.4- The low level of awareness of children's participation right* and *6.b.5- The ethics process in the KSA*.

Further, the policymakers who, because of their power, can break down barriers in this regard by setting a rule to allow researchers to provide training programmes, and show the advantages of using ethics guidelines and consent forms with children, which will improve researchers' knowledge in the research process.

## **6.E Summary**

In concluding this chapter, the main implications for all four groups are how to increase their awareness about the need for more childhood studies; children's participation rights; how to understand children's abilities and ethics as a concept, in general, and ethical guidelines when recruiting children to participate in research. Also, I can postulate that the aim of these implications is concerned with helping people to change their perspectives, but what does 'change' mean in this context? As defined by Fullan and Miles (1992, p. 745) '*Change is a process of coming to grips with new personal meaning, and so it is a learning process*'. According to this definition, the improvement programmes, whether training courses or workshops, are considered learning attempts aimed at helping people in their change process. Such skills improvement will increase knowledge, expand skills and accordingly enhance effectiveness (Guskey, 2002).

Most educational people recognise that they are experts on any education issue before they attend any training course (Lindquist & Lindquist, 2008). In this research, females are the main participants and, as Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002) found from their study, women have a greater desire to change their beliefs compared with men, although they may have less extended environmental knowledge. Although changing people's behaviour is considered a challenge, as established by Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002), Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006), on the other hand, see that changing participants' perspectives can be achieved by providing a variety of different training courses. Moreover, such beliefs could be changed through the presence of a good role model; for example, if students admire their teacher they will follow their behaviour when taught or instructed by them. What is more, the presenting of peoples' experiences, notably those who are in the same situation, will motivate people to change their perspective. Also, as Miller and Mount (2001, p. 469) consider '*The efficacy of training may be enhanced by providing additional individual feedback and consultation*'.

Guskey (2002) found that successful implementations can change and form people's attitudes. The professional leader for any organisation seeks to change the educational



researcher's attitude for the better because, if their behaviours have been changed in regards to any issue, it will change their attitude within their surrounding environment. At the culmination, I believe that the implications in any organisation are considered as a set of assumptions matched with the person, society, and country's culture (Alder & Jelinek, 1986); also, I postulate that the culture of the Saudi people influences their beliefs and how receptive they are to 'newness' and new things from abroad in their lives, such as the concept of ethics in general and ethics guidelines in particular (Al-Sowayegh, 2012).

The next chapter will present the conclusion for this study, how this study contributes to the knowledge and presents my reflection, as a researcher, on this study.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the final conclusions and contribution to knowledge made by this study, which has answered the research questions, and makes recommendations for further research. It reflects the standards to which this study adhered to generate good quality research, and includes the researcher's own personal reflections.

#### 7.A Final Conclusions

This research has explored the different perspectives that educational researchers have to ethics, as a concept and procedure, when recruiting children to participate in research. Five perspectives were identified and, when analysed, revealed the similarities and differences between educational researchers according to their demographic information. The five factors are: knowledge about children's rights to express their voice; acceptance of the concept of ethics; children's voice is unnecessary; ethical approval and research participant consent is important; and belief in children's rights to represent their viewpoints. Also, this research has presented policymakers' perspectives regarding the issue of ethics in general, and in particular the use of consent forms when children participate in research, together with their thoughts regarding future plans to create ethics guidelines in the KSA.

Five key findings emerged from the educational researchers' and policymakers' data following the analysis stage; first, there is a need for more children's rights studies in the KSA; second is about the challenges facing researchers when including children as researcher participants; third shows the weak beliefs pertaining to children's capabilities and the fourth shows the awareness level of children's participation right, along with gender roles as an issue and how females generally do not have the same opportunities as males in terms of expressing themselves. The fifth key finding illustrates the acceptance of ethics as a process in research. This strongly indicates that both groups, i.e. educational researchers and policymakers, have a positive and strong wish to apply ethics guidelines when children decide to participate in research, and the KSA government has the desire to establish ethics guidelines as compulsory procedures for any research in the future. In addition, the last finding also relates to Q-methodology as an approach which was found to be effective for this study.

Thus, the findings from the research suggest solutions that can increase Saudi society's overall awareness concerning children's rights issues in general, and ethics in particular. Moreover, a new research method for researchers, and for the academic community, has been presented.

### **7.B Contributions made by this study**

To ensure that the research and its findings are widely disseminated and far-reaching it will be published in both English and Arabic, so as to allow all research educational communities and societies to benefit from it. This research makes contributions to knowledge both internationally and in the KSA.

For the *international contribution* this study has identified that:

- a- Q-methodology remains an uncommon method for researchers and as such this research adds a new study to the Q-methodology community, as few studies using this method have been conducted.
- b- Using Q-methodology with educational researchers to explore their perspectives towards ethics, when including children in research, has proven to be an effective method to identify these perspectives.
- c- The researcher has created a theoretical framework for the Q-statements so this study can be applied in other countries' contexts by adopting this framework.
- d- This research has made a meaningful contribution by providing a clear and organised thesis and has achieved the aims it set out. These contributions can be shared with other countries which still have low levels of improvement in children's rights issues.

For the *Arabic contribution* this study has identified:

#### Knowledge

- a- To date, there have been no reference regarding Q-methodology in the Arabic language, so this study is the first to publish Q-methodology in Arabic.
- b- This study is considered one of the very first few studies using Q-methodology, as a research method, in Saudi society.

- c- This study is one of the very first few studies about ethics in education research in the KSA. The lack of these kinds of studies is confirmed by Al-Otaibi (2000) (Chapter 3 section 3.d.1 *Ethics Definition*, p.54).

#### Awareness

- a- Translating this research into Arabic will open a new window for Saudi and other Arabic-speaking educational researchers, who are not fluent in the English language, to learn about the Q-methodology research approach.
- b- This study has raised awareness within the Saudi education community regarding ethics issues and has added to the number of studies, in the Arabic language, concerning ethics.
- c- This study will inspire educational researchers to perform future research using new methods, such as Q-methodology as it is considered a new research method both internationally and in the KSA.
- d- Using new methods, such as Q-methodology in KSA, can increase the academic community's awareness about other methods that can be used to explore people's perspectives, rather than using existing questionnaire and interview tools.
- e- This study will increase the awareness of the NCC, which has responsibility for children's rights issues in KSA (see section 3.c.2 *The Importance of Participation Rights p.42*) by encouraging them to create ethical guidelines, in collaboration with the MOE, for researchers who intend to include child participants in their work.
- f- This study will increase the awareness of KSA society about children's rights concerns relating to the children's right-to-a-voice issue, and help the government to implement the UNCRC articles.
- g- As mentioned, there are current limitations in implementing both Articles (see 1.C *Why it is an important topic?* in the Introduction Chapter p.16). By including children as participants in research by allowing them to express themselves, implements Article 12 (*when adults are making decisions that may have an effect on them and/or their lifestyle, children have the right to say what they think should happen, in addition to having their opinions taken into account*) for both genders and Article 13 (*children have the right to get and to share information as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others*). These will enable the KSA to present this in their next report, to be sent to the UNCRC.

### Practical

- a- Some participants mentioned that they had not heard about ethical principles in general; therefore this study will inform educational researchers about these principles and also inform them on how to use them with children in the future.
- b- This study has implications for leadership strategies and development across all university sections.
- c- This study will help educational researchers to update their knowledge and be able to advise others on how to include children in research by designing units which can be taught in education departments in universities in the KSA, beginning with the KSU, as this is the university at which the researcher works. Thereafter, the research can be disseminated to other universities, within the KSA and worldwide.

### **7.C Answering the research questions**

This research has two research questions. Below I summarise the findings by answering each question.

*RQ1: What are the perspectives of educational researchers and policymakers towards the ethics of children's participation in research?*

The research participants (educational researchers and policymakers) have the same perspective about their willingness to increase studies of children and childhood in the KSA because of the lack of these kinds of studies, although each group states different reasons for this lack. Also, they believe that children have limited abilities so this is considered the main challenge when deciding to include them as participants in any project. In addition, both groups have similar perspectives towards children's participation rights; they concur that children should have the right to participate (or not) in research but they differ in the aim of that participation. The policymakers see children's participation in research as a way to hear their voices while the educational researchers see it as a duty for the children. Along the same lines, both groups see that ethical guidelines have to be compulsory in KSA, and have to be applied with both children and adults when participating in research. What is more, both groups agree with the idea of obtaining consent, which has to be from both children and parents when children participate in research.

*RQ2: What lessons emerge about the ethics of children's participation in research for the educational researchers, policymakers, children and children's parents?*

This question shows the findings of the research presented as implications; these will support the views and perspectives of all the research participants relating to the ethics of children's participation in research. The responses of each group offer different implications for future directions in the field, but all have the same aim to help Saudi society to address the gap that has been identified relating to ethics as a concept in the research process. The implications identified from the educational researchers' perspectives can be applied by universities, motivating them to focus on how to increase their awareness concerning children as research participants. This could be achieved through training courses around embedding the ethics process as a requirement for any research. Each university should create an ethics committee, and introduce a teaching unit on how to include child as a participants in research and what the parent's role is in this process.

With respect to the children, the educational researchers have to apply the ethics principles (respect for autonomy, justice, beneficence, non-maleficence) and the government should give more attention to increasing children's awareness about their rights and about the UNCRC. At the same level, there is a requirement to educate children's parents about their role in the research process to encourage their children to participate. This could be achieved by attending a session with the researcher on how to apply the ethics principles.

The last group in the research process is the policymakers. The findings from this research will highlight the role of the KSA government in increasing community awareness around ethics when including children in research by making ethics guidelines compulsory at all universities. Furthermore, by providing sessions and training courses for educational researchers and the universities will increase awareness about children's rights as a concept, the UNCRC role, ethics as a concept and the use of ethical guidelines in the research process. Also, the policymakers have to include the children's rights concept in the education curricula.

What is more, this research shows how to implement Q-methodology in the KSA and the challenges that I faced as a researcher. Also, from the participants' comments on this new method, they suggest that it is implemented online because it will save time in

sorting the Q-statements and give them more freedom when they present their perspectives for their Q- statement choices.

#### **7.D Recommendations for further research**

During the research process, the researcher thought of many projects that could be conducted related to this study. The study could be replicated online, with the same participants, and their experiences/perspectives of Q-sorting both online and manually could be compared. Furthermore, the same study could be implemented with another department, such as science, with participants' perspectives investigated concerning ethics in general, and particularly with children.

Moreover, the same study could be undertaken in another country, such as the UK, where ethics guidelines in the research process are already used, with investigation centred on establishing attitudes and then comparing the findings with Saudi findings. Another approach could be to administer the same study in another country from the Gulf Region or from the Middle East, whose culture is comparable to that of the KSA, in an effort to explore their perspectives towards children participating in research.

It also might be valuable to explore researchers' perspectives towards using a new method, such as Q-methodology in research, and accordingly measure their level of acceptance of this method and identify the strengths and challenges associated with its use. In addition, of further interest might be the application of the same study method with other communities of practice, such as marketing or accounting, to explore their points of view towards using a new research method in KSA.

A final direction for future research would be to replace the adult group with child participants with two types of study being conducted: one to explore perspectives about ethics as a concept and procedure when children participate in research, and the second using Q-methodology to identify opinions in this regard. It would be interesting here to compare adults' and children's perspectives.

#### **7.E How do I know that the research is good quality research?**

To answer this question I have followed Tracy's (2010) article that stated eight criteria for excellent qualitative research (see Appendix 8 for details of the eight "Big-Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research").

**Worthy** criterion: this research is considered as worthy because it has an interesting topic that is pertinent to current Saudi society. It is relevant to education (which is my area) from different aspects and plays a key role in increasing awareness of academic society. Also, it is an attempt to explore the educational researchers' and policymakers' perspectives towards ethics when including children in research and from the implications identified it is suggested that they are encouraged to change their perspectives.

**Rich rigour** criterion: time and attention given to developing a Q-set with a strong theoretical framework that could be operationalised, has provided this research with enough significant data to answer the research questions. What is more, the participants in each method - Q-methodology and interview - contributed to achieving the aim of the study, although I struggled to recruit them. Also, the data collection and analysis procedures were chosen as appropriate to the Saudi context, such as sorting the Q-set in my absence and interviewing the males by phone or via email.

**Sincerity** criterion: this is illustrated by my reflections as a researcher on the mistakes I had to address during the data collection and analysis processes, and the challenges that I faced. For example, the way in which one of the questions in the questionnaire for the Q-participants was written was unclear. Qualitative data also resonate with the different voices of the participants because they sometimes talk from the heart.

**Credibility** criterion: this research presents all the research stages in detail and allowed the participants to reflect their opinions about the Q-methodology, which is considered as a new method in KSA and for them, and the Q-set if they wanted to add or delete any of them, which confirms research credibility.

**Resonate** criterion: what is more this research appears to resonate with current developments in Saudi policy on research ethics guidelines, as the policymakers talked about introducing ethical guidelines for use by universities in general and with respect to research with children. My study is timely as the findings have the potential to make a direct contribution to new policies and guidelines, and so have an impact if the Saudi policymakers set the ethics guidelines as a compulsory step for any research, whether the participants be adults or children.



**Significant contribution** and **ethics** criteria: this research has provided new and useful knowledge for the Saudi community. It opens a new door for educational researchers by introducing a new method in KSA, Q-methodology, and identifies ethics as a concept for those who are not familiar with it. This shows a methodologically and heuristically significant contribution to the field. However, although ethics are currently not a requirement when undertaking research in the KSA, this research focused on the ethical issue by giving the participants the freedom to participate in the research. That is, I understand that their participation is voluntary even though the study was conducted in my university and in my area of specialism, early childhood. Accordingly, I respected their choice to participate or not; even if any wanted to withdraw in the middle of the process I respected that, and also appreciated their honesty. Also, the Q-methodology as a method reduced the researcher's power over the participants and, in this research, most of the participants sorted the Q-set in my absence as a researcher.

**Meaningful** criterion: this research has been presented as a clear thesis that has achieved the stated aim, by selecting an appropriate method to collect, analyse and present the data.

#### **7.F The researcher's personal reflections**

This study is considered as a social science study; thus, the findings can influence education researchers' processes and those of the academic education community. The findings from the participating educational researchers and policymakers were surprising because, despite there being no ethical considerations when carrying out research with children participants, both groups were found to have positive and strong beliefs towards ethics in the research process, with most of them seeing that it should be compulsory. Among the educational researchers, I found that, although some of them had limited ideas about ethics as a concept or process in research, sorting the Q-set considerably increased their understanding of the concept.

It was difficult to recruit educational researchers as participants in the study; they would have undertaken research themselves before so they would have known how researchers struggle to find participants when undertaking a project. In this case, I can excuse them because the method was new in KSA and for them. Although it was new, the participants who did take part in the Q-sort gave good and positive feedback about the method. This was an additional bonus as using a new method - namely that of Q-

methodology - can help and encourage the academic community to identify new research methods, in KSA, and not only use existing and traditional methods.

From the Saudi literature, until now, there has been a lack of childhood and children's rights awareness, and as such this research topic might not be accepted or respected in the context of the culture of Saudi society. Nonetheless, I strongly believe that this research is valuable, new and interesting, and has the propensity to increase the academic community's overall awareness relating to a special issue—that of children's rights and ethics in research. The first plan was to involve children in the research, however the decision was changed and focus was instead directed towards two groups - educational researchers and policymakers - as I identified that there was a need to explore their perspectives rather than children's voices towards ethics. This decision was influenced by two factors: the findings from my MA study that children want to express themselves, and the findings of the last report, namely from the KSA to the UNCRC, which showed a lack of implementation of Articles 12 and 13 of the UNCRC. These factors motivated me to increase the understanding in this domain by raising the concept of the children's voices when they participate in research. What is more, simplifying the process for researchers, when children participate in research, will encourage other researchers to involve children in research and fill the gap in knowledge, which has resulted from the scarcity of research about children and childhood and related ethics-associated issues. However, I believe that this research study can be used to take the Saudi academic community forward.

Personally, I hope this study inspires change in the Saudi academic community by identifying the ethics concept and embedding ethics guidelines and consent forms as compulsory in the research process for all groups (adults and children) and giving more attention to children's rights issues in general, not just Articles 12 and 13. Furthermore, I hope that my successful use of a new research method, Q-methodology in KSA, will encourage enquiring and knowing about and using new research methods, especially Q-methodology.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### First pilot study

#### **Interview with a preschool head teacher**

- 1- Could you kindly tell me about your academic background and working experiences?
- 2- Why did you decide to become a preschool head teacher?
- 3- Have you had any experience of any involvement in educational research in your school? If yes, please tell me about it?
- 4- In your opinion, do you think there is a difference between doing research with children and doing research with adults?
- 5- As a head teacher how do you feel about involving children in research? Is it useful for the child and researcher? Why?
- 6- What are the facilities that you offer for the researcher if she wants to involve children in her research?
- 7- What are the mechanisms between your school as an education institution and the education ministry to support the research process?
- 8- Do you have any comments?

#### **Interview with postgraduate student**

- 1- Could you tell me about your academic background?
- 2- In which department at education school you are studying?



- 3- What is your opinion about involving children in research? Why?
- 4- Do you plan to choose the children as a sample for your thesis?
- 5- From your opinion, do researchers face obstacles when she/he decides to involve children in her/his research?
- 6- Do you think there is a differences between doing research with children and doing with adults?

### **Interview with stockholder in Education Ministry**

- 1- Level of education:----
- 2- What is your occupation and what is your responsibilities: ---
- 3- Some researchers involved children in their research as sample, do you agree this idea? And why?
- 4- How do you measure the awareness of the researchers' steps when they decide to choose the children as participants in their research process?
- 5- What is the role of the education ministry to facilitate the process of involving children in research?
- 6- What are the mechanisms between the education ministry and children's institutions to simplify the process for the researcher to involving children in research?

### **Questionnaire with the educational researchers**

My name is Lina Bashatah. I am a PhD student at the University of Manchester and I am also a lecturer at King Saud University,(KSA), in the field of education. My aim is to measure the attitude of educational researchers towards involving children in research. My interest in this topic emerged from my MA experience when I used different research methods with children.

My Pilot study title is:

#### **Educational researchers' attitudes towards involving children in research.**

If you agree to participate in this research, please read the points below and sign the consent form:

- 1- I have read the information above about the research.
- 2- I will allow the researcher to use the information given in the questionnaire.

3-□ All information submitted on the consent form, the questionnaire and any correspondence with the researcher will remain 100% confidential and will be stored electronically and protected by a secure password accessible only by the researcher.

4-□ Additionally, any information provided will be utilised anonymously without revealing the names of the participants and any other details provided.

5-□ Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any point by writing to:

[Lina.bashatah@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Lina.bashatah@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk)

OR

[Lina.s.b@hotmail.com](mailto:Lina.s.b@hotmail.com)

If you agree with the above, please sign the consent form below.

Kind regards.

Lina Bashatah

### **CONSENT FORM**

Educational researchers' attitudes towards involving children in research.

I have read and understood the purpose of the assignment and agree to take part in this research by completing the questionnaire.

Signed.....

Date.....

Educational researchers' attitudes towards involving children in research

Section 1:

**Demographic information:**

1- Your gender:

Male  Female

2- How many years working experience do you have in the education field:

1-5  6-10  11-15  16-20  more than 20

**Research activities:**

3- Have you undertaken research with children?

Yes  No

4- If yes, how many research studies have you done?

Only one  2-6  7-11  more

6. Have you published any research that you involving children in?

Yes  No

7. If yes, please provide the title of the most recent one:

-----  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Section 2:**

Definition of research methods: Research tools and the techniques, whether quantitative or qualitative (Greener, 2011), can be used with children. The challenge of doing research with children is to choose the best method that enables them to express their views to an adult researcher (Punch, 2002). According to this definition please answer the following questions.

1- Which of these research methods, used with children, have you *heard* about in your position as an educational researcher (You may choose more than one)

**Qualitative Methods:**

Children drawing  Focus group  Observation   
Photographs  Diaries  Portfolio   
Body collage  Interviews  Reflective journal   
Co-operative meetings

**Quantitative Methods:**

Questionnaire  Work sheets   
Observation schedule  Spider diagrams

- 2- Have you *used* any of these methods with children in your research?  
 Yes  No

If yes please identify which ones.

-----

**Qualitative Methods:**

- Children drawing  Focus group  Observation   
 Photographs  Diaries  Portfolio   
 Body collage  Interviews  Reflective journal   
 Co-operative meetings

**Quantitative Methods:**

- Questionnaire  Work sheets  Observation schedule   
 Spider diagrams

**Section 3:**

The following questions contain 21 statements about researchers' attitudes towards research methods used with children. Please read each statement and tick the box which indicates how you feel about each of the statements.

There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement, but give the answer which seems to describe how you feel.

statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree and disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I like doing research with children.					
2. I would feel insecure if I involve children in my research.					
3. Doing research with children is easy to understand.					
4. Involving children in research is worthless.					
5. Involving children in research is a complicated process.					
6. Doing research with children should be a required part of my professional training.					
7. Involving children in research is not useful to the typical professional.					
8. I would get frustrated when involving children in my research.					
9. I agree in involving children in research.					
10. I would be under stress when involving children in research.					

11. I look forward to taking courses about how doing research with children.					
12. Conclusions from research that involving children are rarely presented in everyday life.					
13. Involving children in research is quickly learned by most people.					
14. Learning how to do research with children requires a great deal of discipline.					
15. I will have no application doing research with children in my profession.					
16. I am scared to involve children in research.					
17. I can do research with children.					
18. Involving children in research is irrelevant in my everyday life.					
19. Involving children in research is highly technical.					
20. I find it difficult to understand the concepts of doing research with children.					
21. Most people have to learn a new way of thinking how to involve children in research					

## Appendix 2

### **The report of my second pilot study using Q-methodology:**

This report explains how my pilot study was developed and presents the participants' comments about the method, which was a new method for them.

#### **Pilot study preparation:**

After I completed my last draft of the statements with my supervisors, I translated it into Arabic. Then I showed my translation to one of my friends who is bilingual, and asked for her feedback which I considered. I printed each statement in Arabic on one side of a card and in English on the other side. I did that on purpose to ask my participants which language was clearer and to give me their comments about the translation. I prepared for each participant an envelope which included the 54 cards, a questionnaire about the participant's demographic information, a consent form, an information paper to help each participant understand how to sort the statements and the distribution of the Q to demonstrate how the statements were to be sorted.

#### **The Participants**

The five participants were all Saudi females who were PhD education students at different levels at UK universities. Background information about them is provided below:

- 1- A third year PhD student who did her MA in the UK and her BA in the Early Years education field. She had 6–10 years' experience at KSU as an educational researcher and had undertaken one research project with children in her PhD study.
- 2- A first year PhD student who did her MA in the KSA and her BA in the Early Years education field. She had 6–10 years' experience at KSU as an educational researcher and had undertaken one research project with children in her MA study.
- 3- A first year PhD student who did her MA in the KSA and her BA in the Early Years education field. She had 6–10 years' experience at KSU as an educational researcher and had not undertaken any research with children.
- 4- A third year PhD student who did her MA in the UK and her BA in computer science. She had 1–5 years' experience in the education field, and she had not undertaken any research with children.
- 5- A second year PhD student who did her MA in the UK and her BA in the English language. She had 1–5 years' experience in the education field and had not undertaken any research with children.

#### **Pilot study implementation:**

I conducted my pilot study twice, once in London with three of my participants and again in Manchester with two participants. First, I gave each participant an envelope while I retained a second copy. I asked them to make sure that everyone had the same papers. Then I showed them a photo of a person sorting the statements on a table, explained in brief how they should sort the statements and provided the information paper for further explanation if anyone did not understand my explanation. I mentioned that each card had the statement in two languages, Arabic and English. I instructed them to work on the Arabic side and provided two avenues for help if they did not understand the statement. First, I asked them to tell me; second, I instructed them to check the English side because that would help me to test my translation. Also, I explained that if they had any questions or if there were any unclear statements they could ask me for clarification at any time.

Additionally, I told them that they had no limitation on time to sort their cards, and I mentioned that the number of the statement was meant for ease of reference only. Then I asked them if they would mind if I recorded their voices when they did the sorting, and all of them give me verbal permission to do so.

The first pilot study in London involved three participants and took 45 minutes, while the second study in Manchester involved two participants and took 1 hour.

### **Participants' comments**

#### **1- Language:**

The participants indicated that the Arabic statements were clear but needed some improvement; however, the English ones were very clear for them. The participants asked me some questions about some words in the statements:

- a- The authorities and the stakeholders - Do you mean here in the UK or overseas or in our country (KSA)?
- b- Participate and involving these terms are the same in Arabic language but are different in English.
- c- My professional training - Do you mean the university or my department?
- d- I have taken training courses about involving children in research - Do you mean from my professional institution or from any other institution? Also do you mean outside or inside my country?

#### **2- The method of sorting:**

Before the participants started sorting, I explained the method and offered two ways to implement it, either on a table or on the floor. Each of my participants wanted to sort in different ways, as noted below:

- a- Three of them preferred to read all the statements and then write their choices on the distribution that I gave them. "This way will organize my thoughts and be clearer for you as a researcher when you want to analyse the statements" (the first group work at KSU)
- b- Two of them wanted to sort on the table because that was the method shown to them. They explained, "I did it as it has been shown for me".

#### **3- Difficulties facing participants:**

The following are the participants' comments from when they were sorting:

- a- "Some statements I put them at the agree area because I do not disagree but because of the number of the statements at each area. I put them at the disagree area". I asked why she did not put them at (0), and she responded, "Because I have already filled this area. Also, it takes time for sorting the statements".
- b- "There is a limitation in each area, the agree and disagree. Maybe I need more space on each area. Also, I think the problem is the time". I replied that I had given the participants free time. She answered, "Yes, but it takes time to read them then sort them on agree and disagree. Maybe I have to understand how the game is, because it's like a game and you have to understand it very well".
- c- "I think you have to decrease the (0) areas because I want to put more on agree or disagree areas".
- d- "What can I do if I have more than two strongly agree OR strongly disagree?"
- e- "If I have no idea about the statement, where do I have to put it?"

#### **4- Participants' perspective about the Q-methodology:**

- a- All of the participants said, "It is an interesting method; I like it".
- b- "Well organized, you explained very well, and you gave us the information paper to simplify the process".
- c- "The size of the cards is perfect, and the font is very clear".
- d- "The translation from English to Arabic is 95% clear, but it needs some corrections".
- e- "I like it; it's like a game".
- f- "What I like, you gave us statements about your topic; that shows me your interest in this topic, and at the same time you gave us the freedom of how we sorted it. I mean even if I have no idea about your topic, the statement gives me information about it".
- g- "I like the (0) area because it's the best solution for the statement that I do not have any idea about".

#### **5- Participants' suggestions:**

- a- Three of the participants, who were working at KSU and were considered as a representative sample for me, suggested that I conduct this method online. They argued that it will be easier and offer some benefits:
  - 1- "You can collect more participants because you will send it by email for many people".
  - 2- "You can't catch 40-60 participants from the Uni at the same time because they are teaching and have meetings, etc. So you have to do it more than five times if you decide to do it face to face, or you have to do each colleague in the education department alone; it does mean eight times, and maybe it will work".

I explained that conducting the method face to face allowed me to hear their comments when they were sorting. Their response was that it worked because it was a small group made up of my friends. Also, the participants commented that if they had been a large group, they would have been chatting among themselves about other issues. What is more, I told them that there is a website to do this method online but only in English. When I asked for their advice, they suggested I write it in English and then copy and paste the Arabic under the English. Also, they suggested asking the website host for help.

- b- "If you want to use face-to-face sorting, ask the participants to fill their statement numbers on the distribution ". They argued that doing so would both allow them to change their minds if they wanted before giving to me and help me when I analysed it.
- c- "You can make it optional, sorting on the floor or on the table or write it on the distribution ".
- d- "I think if we are sorting on the floor, it is very difficult for you to have a photo; maybe the statement number will be unclear. Think about it".
- e- "I think if you put the distribution on large paper, A3 for example, and ask the participants to sort the statements on it because it will be easier for them if they want to change the statement place.



### Appendix 3

#### The statements cards size

1-I am unfamiliar with the concept of children's right to a voice.	1- بالنسبة لي مفهوم حق الاطفال في التعبير عن أنفسهم مفهوم غير مالوف.
2- I have a good understanding of the concept of children's right to a voice.	2- لدي معرفة جيدة عن مفهوم حق الطفل في التعبير عن نفسه.

## Appendix 4

### The Q-methodology steps

#### 4 (a): The consent form

My name is Lina Bashatah. I am a PhD student at the University of Manchester and I am also a lecturer at King Saud University in the field of education. My aim is to identify educational researchers' perspectives towards the ethics of children's participation in research.

My study title is:

#### **Saudi researchers' perspectives on the ethics of children's participation in research: an exploration using Q-methodology**

If you agree to participate in this research, please read the points below and sign the consent form:

- 1- I have read the information above about the research.
- 2- I will allow the researcher to use the information given in the questionnaire.
- 3- All information submitted on the consent form, the questionnaire and any correspondence with the researcher will remain 100% confidential and will be stored electronically and protected by a secure password accessible only by the researcher.
- 4- Additionally, any information provided will be utilised anonymously without revealing the names of the participants and any other details provided.
- 5- Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any point by writing to:

[Lina.bashatah@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Lina.bashatah@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk)

OR

[Lina.s.b@hotmail.com](mailto:Lina.s.b@hotmail.com)

If you agree with the above, please sign the consent form below.

Kind regards.

Lina Bashatah

**4 (b): The Demographic Questionnaire**

**Demographic information:**

5- Your gender:

Male

Female

6- I work at:

King Saud University

Princess Nourah Bint Abdullrhman University

7- I am from \_\_\_\_\_ school at the education department:

8- I am :

Lecturer

Assistant Professor

Associate Professor

Professor

9- I obtained my PhD from :

Saudi Arabia

Abroad

5(a)- If you have received your PhD from a Saudi university can you please provide the name of the university and city?

-----  
-----

5(b)- If you have received your PhD from a university abroad can you please provide the name of the name of the country and University ?

-----  
-----

10- My working experience is:

1-5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

16-20 years

more than 20 years

11- Have you undertaken research with children?

Yes

No

7(a)- If yes, how many researches have you done with children:

Only one

2-6

7-11

more

**4 (c) The Questionnaire after the participants have completed  
Their Q-sorting**

Thank you very much for participating in this study, I really appreciate your help. In addition to completing the Q-sorting, I would be most grateful if you could give me your opinion about the used tool and give me your recommendation to develop it in future use.

1- Which statements that you have chosen to be most agree?

a- -----

b- -----

Could you tell me why?

-----  
-----

2- Which statements that you have chosen to be most disagree?

a- -----

b- -----

Could you tell me why?

-----  
-----

3- Are there any statements which are unclear (can you suggest better phrasing?)

-----  
-----

4- Any statements which don't seem to be useful? And why?

-----  
-----

5- Any statements which could be added?

-----  
-----

6- Could you tell me your overall thoughts and experiences of the Q-sort activity?

-----  
-----

7- Have you faced any problem while you are Q-sorting? If yes mention at which stage?

-----  
-----

8- Do you have any suggestions to improve the future use of this tool? If yes, could you advise me please how?

-----  
-----

## Appendix 5

### Feedback from the Q-participants after the Q-sorting process

N	Q3: Are there any statements which are unclear and if so can you suggest better phrasing?	Q4: Did any of the statements not seem to be useful? And why?	Q5: Do you suggest adding any more statements? If so, what would they be?	Q6: Could you tell me your overall thoughts and experiences of the Q-sort activity?	Q7: Have you faced any problem while you are Q-sorting? If yes, please mention at which stage?	Q8: Do you have any suggestions to improve the future use of this tool? If yes, could you advise me please how?
1	No	No	No	I like it.	Yes, forget the card's number, that confused me so I have to review it more than once.	No
2	No	No	No	This is the first time.	No	No
3	No	No	No	This is the first time.	No	No
4	----	----	----	----	----	-----
5	-----	-----	----	----	----	-----
6	No	No	No	This is the first time.	Yes, sorting cards and writing them on the distribution.	No
7	No	Statement 43.	They are enough	Wonderful and new experience. It organized my ideas.	No	Make a big, colourful distribution paper to write the cards' numbers on.
8	Yes, some statements are similar so they need more thought to understand them. Also it needs a long time to complete the process.	No	No	Enjoyable, unique and it activated my thinking.	No	No

9	-----	The statements are biased for specific participants	-----	This is the first time.	Long process	-----
10	-----	-----	-----	Long process and moving the cards confused me.	-----	The statements are biased, it will be better if you paraphrase in a different way.
11	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
12	-----	-----	-----	Great experience but it made me tired.	Yes, it is not a practical process because it needs more effort and focus and that decreases the participant's motivation when they sort and that encourages them to sort randomly. Also, the number under each column restricted me .	Make the number of cards under each column free.
13	-----	-----	No	It is not clear for the participants because when they explore, each statement has the opposite, this will change their answers.	It is explained in Q6.	-Write all the statements on one paper and the participant will sort them. - It's clear that most statements are related to ethics with children, so there is no right or wrong answer so

						why not make the sorting free.
14	-----	-----	-----	Very long process and I repeated it twice to be sure.	-----	-----
15	-----	-----	-----	I prefer if it is online.	Yes, some statements I want to change their place but the tool gave me a specific number under each column	Do it online.
16	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
17	Yes, (13) unclear and I do not understand (22)	-----	No	Confusing me and unorganised. Also it did not help in organising my ideas because I had to read the statement more than once and that effected my response negatively.	Yes, when I sorted the statements because they are long , too many, some of them are opposite to each other and some of them are not understandable.	I think if you provide the statements in a traditional way will be better, more organized and will not confuse the participant.
18	-----	-----	Yes, explain the importance of the research for children and parents.	The statements are near each other in meaning.	Yes, when I put the statements under columns because some of them I want to put them (+) but I put them on (-) because of no space.	Yes, if you can put the statements on big paper and we can sort them from +5--→ -5 depending on our feelings.
19	Yes, (50) is it acceptable to reveal a child participant's identity?	Yes, (22) that statement is strange to me! How does the researcher	-----	-----	Yes, at the first step to sort the (+) statements and the (-) statements.	It seems to me that the (Q) is new in Saudi culture, so it has to be introduced to

		create the ethical form? Where is the research centre's role?				the research community, then applied.
20	-----	-----	-----	This the first time for me.	Boring and very long process.	Decrease the Q cards and focus on the important ideas.
21	No	(54) because when the parents allow their child to participate in the research it is not their right to see their responses	-----	It is considered as a new tool to capture the answers in a more accurate way, but the difficulty is sorting the number in the column.	Yes, I want to put more than 2 statements in column (-5) and (+5) but there is no place.	No
22	-----	-----	-----	This is the first time for me.	No	-----
23	-----	-----	-----	It is an enjoyable and new experience for me that I have known about the Q.	Choosing an appropriate number under each column.	-----
24	-----	-----	-----	The tool is clear but it takes a long time to do.	-----	-----
25	-----	-----	The researcher has to insert some art activities to explore the child's tendency	-----	Yes, sort the cards.	I prefer if you leave it at one paper to not waste our time in organising them.
26	-----	-----	No	Good but it takes time.	No	-----



27	Yes, (40) rather than “practical reasons” different reasons.	No	No	This is the first time.	Yes, the number of cards are too many and it takes a long time to sort.	-----
28	No	Yes, (2) because when you ask anyone if they have knowledge in any subject the answer will be yes because they think they have knowledge even if it is a little. Nobody will admit that they don't know about anything.	No	It takes a long time and needs strong focus but it was enjoyable and after the sorting has been done you feel an achievement.	The similarity between the statements. The number of the (+) column is few. Change the sorting more than one time, to make my answers logical it takes time.	Decrease the statements. Do not write opposite statements. Give justification for each choice not only statements in (+5) and (-5).
29	No	No	No	I see that it is an enjoyable experience. Give the participants time to think and sort according to the importance of the subject.	No	No
30	No	No	----	-----	----	-----
31	No	No	No	I do not have any experience with this tool.	No	No
32	No	No	No	It's very complicated, takes a long time and the participants	It takes a long time and the statements are too many.	-----

				need to think more than once to do it. Also I see an interview will give the same results and is easier.		
33	No	Stimulate the participants	-----	Although, It takes a long time and it is very long it lets the participants focus and think.	It is very long.	-----
34	No	-----	No, but in future if you want to add some statements about to what extent the child participates in research not just about the ethics.	New experience and I want to know more about it.	The similarity and contradictions in many of the statements confused me.	No, but really am looking forward to knowing more about this tool.
35	No	No	No	It takes a time to answer.	The time.	Yes, raise researchers' awareness about this tool.
36	No	No	No	It makes me tired and takes a long time and effort.	Yes, it was very long and needed focus and space to do.	No
37	Yes, (43) what does it mean enjoying their participation?	----	-----	It takes time but makes you focus on your answers. You have to write the grade for each column such as (0)	No	Write the way to do it in more detail.

				natural, (+5 ) most agree.		
38	No	No	No	It's a new and exciting experience. Also it allows us to know a new tool rather than the questionnaire.	No	No
39	Yes, (22) it's a fact not my feeling or my perspective. I think it will be better if you write: "what is your opinion about ...".	No	No	Never have I used it before.	Need more time and much concentration.	No
40	Yes, (21) I can say yes and I can say no!	Yes, (2) it is not appropriate for this research	No	-----	Yes, when I sorted the statements. If you put all the statements in one paper and the participants write the value near each one it will be easier.	No
41	No	No, they are well worded although there is some similarity in same statements but it's thoughtful.	No, they are more than enough.	New and beautiful and I want to know more about the analysis.	No	Decrease the statements, it's confusing,
42	-----	-----	-----	Good experience but I wish to decrease the statements.	Yes, when I sort the statements in the (+) column I mean from (+5 → +1)	To be easier, I wish you would make it online.

43	Some statements are similar and some of them have the same meaning.	I have to read all the statements again to answer this question and that will take a long time.	-----	It needs time, effort and focus for each statement and sometime you have to keep the statement to explore the similarity.	Yes, because of the subject. I have done research with children in the past but it was a long time ago so I do not know if there are any changes in the rules.	I advise you to change the participants and choose participants who have researched with children now or recently.
44	Yes, (18) need to summarise it. (48) rather than “the researcher has to” write it is favoured or better to. (37) need to paraphrase in Arabic.	Yes, (29) if the researcher keeps reminding the child about their withdrawal from the research might affect their decision and let them think to withdraw.	-----	Enjoyable experience because the tool is new for me and more knowledge for me, as a researcher about the childhood field.	Takes a long time.	Make it online, it will be easier.
45	Yes, (18) I do not know how to paraphrase again but it was unclear.	No	Yes, write the children's age who will participate in the research.	Enjoyable experience.	Yes, the limitation on the numbers of the statements that I have to put under (-5) and (+5).	Yes, increase the number of the (+5) and (-5) columns.
46	Yes, (18) this statement I did not understand.	Yes, (12), I think the subject and the sample are related to each other in any research, so not my supervisor's decision.	-----	Good experience it stimulated me to try it.	No, but the number of the statements are too many.	No, because I am a participant, it is not my role to create or give any suggestions.
47	No	No	Yes, stress on the	It was a rich experience	No	No

			ethics issue with the disabled children when they participate in research. Also, insert ethics concepts in educational researchers' modules.	because it increased my awareness about the importance of ethics.		
48	No	No	Yes, does the researcher have the right to refuse the child's participation when they want to participate.	Wonderful experience, it allowed me to choose my answers in depth and understand the statements very well.	Yes, when I completed all my statements and I have one but it is not appropriate with the column.	Yes, the way of sorting the statements with the values such as matching them by pen when they are in two columns
49	No	No	No	Wonderful and enjoyable experience.	No	No
50	-----	-----	-----	I do not have previous experience.	Yes, the statements that I want to put them under (+2) more than the space	No
51	-----	-----	-----	Wonderful , enjoyable and non-expendable experience.	-----	-----
52	No	No	No	Enjoyable experience but it needs time and focus.	No	Decrease the statements to sort them in more focus.

## Appendix 6

### Crib sheet for factors

#### **\*Factor Interpretation crib sheet for factor 1**

##### **Top two statements (most agree +5):**

3- The same attention to ethics is needed when working with adults as with child research participants (+5).

27- It should be compulsory to follow ethical guidelines when conducting research with children (+5).

##### **Statements sorted higher than other factors:**

2- I have a good understanding of the concept of children's right to a voice (+3)

6- It is my duty as an educational researcher to include children in research (0)

7- I would include children in research because it would benefit my career (0)

29- It is essential that child participants are given regular reminders that they can withdraw from the research if they feel uncomfortable or upset(+1)

32- It is the child's right to get detailed explanation about research steps in order to decide upon their participation (+4)

37- Informing children about the nature of the research is vital because it helps them to decide about their participation (+4)

##### **Statements sorted lower than other factors:**

11- Including children as research participants allows their viewpoints to be heard (+1).

24- Ethics forms and procedures are designed to protect and ensure the respect of researchers (-3).

35- I believe obtaining parent's permission for their child's participation is enough, without asking the child (-4).

38- Informing children about the research plan is pointless because they are too young to understand (-4)

44- The researchers' aim is to collect data from all children in their study regardless of whether or not they are enjoying their participation (-3)

51- The researcher only has to inform the parents, not the child, about potential risks that their child might face while participating in the research (-4)

##### **Bottom two statement (most disagree -5)**

28- Following ethical guidelines when conducting research with children should be optional (-5)

34- Giving children time to decide whether or not to participate in research is unnecessary (-5)

**\*Factor Interpretation crib sheet for factor 2**

**Top two statements (most agree +5):**

4- Attention to research ethics is especially important when working with child participants (+5).

27- It should be compulsory to follow ethical guidelines when conducting research with children (+5).

**Statements sorted higher than other factors:**

1- I am unfamiliar with the concept of children's right to a voice (-1).

2- I have a good understanding of the concept of children's right to a voice(+1).

3- The same attention to ethics is needed when working with adults as with child research participants (+4).

6- It is my duty as an educational researcher to include children in research (0)

11-Including children as research participants allows their viewpoints to be heard (+3)

13-If you want to understand educational experience, children are the people to ask (+1)

18- Procedures for taking consent as required at western Universities would be useful for raising awareness about research ethics in KSA(+3)

19- Universities have the responsibility to provide training courses in research ethics (+4)

22- It's my duty to create my own ethical form if I want to use one with my research participants (+1).

30- Once the child and their parents have consented to taking part, it is important that they are encouraged to complete the study (+3)

31- Children lack real understanding about what it means to decide upon participating in research (+2)

39- Researchers should try to capture the experiences of as wide a range of children as possible (e.g. in terms of ability, gender, age... etc)(+2)

46- It is unnecessary to share the findings of the research with children (-1)

51- The researcher only has to inform the parents, not the child, about potential risks that their child might face while participating in the research (+4)

**Statements sorted lower than other factors:**

7- I would include children in research because it would benefit my career (-2)

12- If I include children as participants in my research, it will be my supervisor's decision (-3)

14- The opinions of educational experts are more valuable than children's views because children are too young to have useful ideas and suggestions (-4)

- 15- Some Saudi children might find it difficult to refuse to participate in research if asked by an adult (-1).
- 20- Special training courses on ethics for researchers are unnecessary in KSA (-4).
- 21- My institution has their own ethical forms to use with participants in research (-2)
- 23- Ethics forms and procedures are designed to only protect and ensure the respect of the participants (-4).
- 24- Ethics forms and procedures are designed to protect and ensure the respect of researchers (-3)
- 26- Completing ethics forms and procedures for my research takes a long time (-2)
- 33- It is the child's right to be given enough time to decide whether to participate or not (-1).
- 36- In my view the researcher should obtain consent from both the parents and the child to include a child in research (+2)
- 37- Informing children about the nature of the research is vital because it helps them to decide about their participation (-1).
- 44- The researchers' aim is to collect data from all children in their study regardless of whether or not they are enjoying their participation (-3).
- 50- The researcher has to be sensitive to when it might be necessary to reveal a child participant's identity to a third party (0)
- 53- In research it is the children's right to withhold their answers from their parents (-3).

**Bottom two statement ( most disagree -5)**

- 10- I believe that adults can represent children's viewpoints (-5)
- 42- As a researcher I prefer to include only one gender (girls or boys) in my research because it's easier (-5).



**\*Factor Interpretation crib sheet for factor 3**

**Top two statements (most agree +5):**

52- The researcher has to inform children about potential risks to help them decide whether or not to take part (+5)

54- Parents have a right to see the responses of their children in research studies because their children are under age (+5)

**Statements sorted higher than other factors:**

1- I am unfamiliar with the concept of children's right to a voice (-1).

3- The same attention to ethics is needed when working with adults as with child research participants(+3).

7- I would include children in research because it would benefit my career (0)

10- I believe that adults can represent children's viewpoints (+1)

11- Including children as research participants allows their viewpoints to be heard (+3)

14- The opinions of educational experts are more valuable than children's views because children are too young to have useful ideas and suggestions (0)

15- Some Saudi children might find it difficult to refuse to participate in research if asked by an adult(+1)

17- Asking participants to sign western-style consent forms could seem strange/inappropriate for Saudi participants (0).

20- Special training courses on ethics for researchers are unnecessary in KSA (-1).

21- My institution has their own ethical forms to use with participants in research (0)

24- Ethics forms and procedures are designed to protect and ensure the respect of researchers (-1)

28- Following ethical guidelines when conducting research with children should be optional (-3).

31- Children lack real understanding about what it means to decide upon participating in research (+1)

32- It is the child's right to get detailed explanation about research steps in order to decide upon their participation (+2)

33- It is the child's right to be given enough time to decide whether to participate or not (4).

34- Giving children time to decide whether or not to participate in research is unnecessary (-1)

35- I believe obtaining parent's permission for their child's participation is enough, without asking the child (+1)

44- The researchers' aim is to collect data from all children in their study regardless of whether or not they are enjoying their participation (+4)

48- The researcher has to give children an incentive after the research to thank them for their participation (+2)

51- The researcher only has to inform the parents, not the child, about potential risks that their child might face while participating in the research (+2)

**Statements sorted lower than other factors:**

2- I have a good understanding of the concept of children's right to a voice (-1)

6- It is my duty as an educational researcher to include children in research (-3)

8- I would include children as participants in research to allow their voices to be heard (-3).

13- If you want to understand educational experience, children are the people to ask (-3)

16- Most Saudi children have the confidence to decline to take part in research (-3)

19- Universities have the responsibility to provide training courses in research ethics (-1)

23- Ethics forms and procedures are designed to only protect and ensure the respect of the participants (-2).

26- Completing ethics forms and procedures for my research takes a long time (0).

27- It should be compulsory to follow ethical guidelines when conducting research with children (2).

30- Once the child and their parents have consented to taking part, it is important that they are encouraged to complete the study (-4).

36- In my view the researcher should obtain consent from both the parents and the child to include a child in research (+2)

37- Informing children about the nature of the research is vital because it helps them to decide about their participation (+1)

38- Informing children about the research plan is pointless because they are too young to understand (-2).

39- Researchers should try to capture the experiences of as wide a range of children as possible (e.g. in terms of ability, gender, age... etc) (-2)

40- For practical reasons, the perspectives of some groups of children will tend to be more prominent in research than others (-2)

43- As an educational researcher I have to ensure that all children are enjoying their participation in research (0)

45- It is the children's right to know about the research outcome (-4)

46- It is unnecessary to share the findings of the research with children (-3)

53- In research it is the children's right to withhold their answers from their parents(0).

**Bottom two statement ( most disagree -5)**

5- My main reason for including children participants in research would be because they are a useful source of data (-5).

9- I believe that only children can represent themselves (-5)

**\*Factor Interpretation crib sheet for factor 4**

**Top two statements (most agree +5):**

4- Attention to research ethics is especially important when working with child participants (+5).

36- In my view the researcher should obtain consent from both the parents and the child to include a child in research (+5).

**Statements sorted higher than other factors:**

3- The same attention to ethics is needed when working with adults as with child research participants (+3).

7- I would include children in research because it would benefit my career (0).

10- I believe that adults can represent children's viewpoints (-4)

12- If I include children as participants in my research, it will be my supervisor's decision (+1).

14- The opinions of educational experts are more valuable than children's views because children are too young to have useful ideas and suggestions (0).

15- Some Saudi children might find it difficult to refuse to participate in research if asked by an adult (+1).

18- Procedures for taking consent as required at western Universities would be useful for raising awareness about research ethics in KSA (+2).

19- Universities have the responsibility to provide training courses in research ethics(+4).

22- It's my duty to create my own ethical form if I want to use one with my research participants (+1).

23- Ethics forms and procedures are designed to only protect and ensure the respect of the participants (-1)

25- As an educational researcher I believe that having ethics forms and procedures help me when planning my fieldwork (+4).

26- Completing ethics forms and procedures for my research takes a long time (+3).

28- Following ethical guidelines when conducting research with children should be optional (-3)

32- It is the child's right to get detailed explanation about research steps in order to decide upon their participation (+2)

39- Researchers should try to capture the experiences of as wide a range of children as possible (e.g. in terms of ability, gender, age... etc) (+2)

42- As a researcher I prefer to include only one gender (girls or boys) in my research because it's easier (-3).

44- The researchers' aim is to collect data from all children in their study regardless of whether or not they are enjoying their participation (-1)

52- The researcher has to inform children about potential risks to help them decide whether or not to take part (+2).

53- In research it is the children's right to withhold their answers from their parents (+3).

54- Parents have a right to see the responses of their children in research studies because their children are under age (0).

**Statements sorted lower than other factors:**

1- I am unfamiliar with the concept of children's right to a voice (-4).

2- I have a good understanding of the concept of children's right to a voice (0).

5- My main reason for including children participants in research would be because they are a useful source of data (0).

8- I would include children as participants in research to allow their voices to be heard (+1).

9- I believe that only children can represent themselves (+1).

13- If you want to understand educational experience, children are the people to ask (-2).

16- Most Saudi children have the confidence to decline to take part in research (-1).

17- Asking participants to sign western-style consent forms could seem strange/inappropriate for Saudi participants (-2).

29- It is essential that child participants are given regular reminders that they can withdraw from the research if they feel uncomfortable or upset (-1)

31- Children lack real understanding about what it means to decide upon participating in research (-4).

38- Informing children about the research plan is pointless because they are too young to understand (-1)

40- For practical reasons, the perspectives of some groups of children will tend to be more prominent in research than others (-2)

41- The researchers should capture the voices of children of both genders (boys & girls) in their research (-1).

43- As an educational researcher I have to ensure that all children are enjoying their participation in research (0)

48- The researcher has to give children an incentive after the research to thank them for their participation (-3)

49- The researcher has to respect children's wish to reveal their identity (-1)

50- The researcher has to be sensitive to when it might be necessary to reveal a child participant's identity to a third party (+3)

51- The researcher only has to inform the parents, not the child, about potential risks that their child might face while participating in the research (-2)

**Bottom two statement ( most disagree -5):**

34- Giving children time to decide whether or not to participate in research is unnecessary (-5)

35- I believe obtaining parent's permission for their child's participation is enough, without asking the child (-5).

**\*Factor Interpretation crib sheet for factor 5**

**Top two statements (most agree +5):**

41- The researchers should capture the voices of children of both genders (boys & girls) in their research (+5)

50- The researcher has to be sensitive to when it might be necessary to reveal a child participant's identity to a third party (+5)

**Statements sorted higher than other factors:**

1- I am unfamiliar with the concept of children's right to a voice (-1).

5- My main reason for including children participants in research would be because they are a useful source of data (+3)

7- I would include children in research because it would benefit my career (-1)

8- I would include children as participants in research to allow their voices to be heard (+3)

9- I believe that only children can represent themselves (+4)

16- Most Saudi children have the confidence to decline to take part in research (0)

38- Informing children about the research plan is pointless because they are too young to understand (+1)

40- For practical reasons, the perspectives of some groups of children will tend to be more prominent in research than others (+3)

43- As an educational researcher I have to ensure that all children are enjoying their participation in research (+3)

49- The researcher has to respect children's wish to reveal their identity (+2)

**Statements sorted lower than other factors:**

3- The same attention to ethics is needed when working with adults as with child research participants (0)

4- The same attention to ethics is needed when working with adults as with child research participants (-2)

18- Procedures for taking consent as required at western Universities would be useful for raising awareness about research ethics in KSA (0)

22- It's my duty to create my own ethical form if I want to use one with my research participants (-2).

25- As an educational researcher I believe that having ethics forms and procedures help me when planning my fieldwork (+1)

32- It is the child's right to get detailed explanation about research steps in order to decide upon their participation (-1)

52- The researcher has to inform children about potential risks to help them decide whether or not to take part (-1)

54- Parents have a right to see the responses of their children in research studies because their children are under age (-3).

**Bottom two statement ( most disagree -5):**

10- I believe that adults can represent children's viewpoints (-5)

42- As a researcher I prefer to include only one gender (girls or boys) in my research because it's easier (-5).



## **Appendix 7**

### **Interview questions for the policymakers**

- 1- Level of education:
- 2- What is your occupation and what are your responsibilities:
- 3- Are you aware of studies that involve children as participants in educational research?
- 4- Some researchers have involved children in their research as part of their sample of research participants, what do you see as the benefits and disadvantages of involving children in research in this way? And why?
- 5- To what extent do you think researchers need to be aware of ethical issues when they choose children as participants in their research?
- 6- Do you have any particular ethical guidelines that you use? Further prompts what are the mechanisms between the National Committee for Childhood and the researchers regarding ethics for the researcher when having children participate in research?
- 7- There are some events for Saudi children which they have participated in to express their views about such things as TED kids at Riyadh, your scholarship movie, etc. Do you know about these events? If yes, does the National Committee for Childhood sponsor these events? If no, why not?  
Notably, this question was posed only to the National Committee for Childhood
- 8- Do you want to add any comment?

## Appendix 8

Eight “Big-Tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research.

Criteria for quality (end goal)	Various means practices and methods through which to achieve
Worthy topic	<p>The topic of the research is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant</li> <li>• Timely</li> <li>• Significant</li> <li>• Interesting</li> </ul>
Rich rigor	<p>The study uses sufficient, abundant, appropriate, and complex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theoretical constructs</li> <li>• Data and time in the field</li> <li>• Sample(s)</li> <li>• Context(s)</li> <li>• Data collection and analysis processes</li> </ul>
Sincerity	<p>The study is characterized by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher(s)</li> <li>• Transparency about the methods and challenges</li> </ul>
Credibility	<p>The research is marked by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thick description, concrete detail, explication of tacit (nontextual) knowledge, and showing rather than telling</li> <li>• Triangulation or crystallization</li> <li>• Multivocality</li> <li>• Member reflections</li> </ul>
Resonance	<p>The research influences, affects, or moves particular readers or a variety of audiences through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aesthetic, evocative representation</li> <li>• Naturalistic generalizations</li> <li>• Transferable findings</li> </ul>
Significant contribution	<p>The research provides a significant contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conceptually/theoretically</li> <li>• Practically</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morally</li> <li>• Methodologically</li> <li>• Heuristically</li> </ul>
Ethical	<p>The research considers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedural ethics (such as human subjects)</li> <li>• Situational and culturally specific ethics</li> <li>• Relational ethics</li> <li>• Exiting ethics (leaving the scene and sharing the research)</li> </ul>
Meaningful coherence	<p>The study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieves what it purports to be about</li> <li>• Uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goals</li> <li>• Resonance Significant contribution Ethical Meaningful coherence Meaningfully interconnects literature, research questions/foci, findings, and interpretations with each other</li> </ul>

## Appendix 9

<b>Glossary</b>	
<b>Term</b>	
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	KSA
King Saud University	KSU
Princes Nourah bint Abdulrahman University	PNU
National commission for childhood	NCC
Ministry of Education	MOE
Ministry of Higher Education	MOHE
United Nations	UN
Convention on the Rights of the Child	CRC
United Nation Convention on the Right of the Child	UNCRC
International Labour Organisation	ILO
Child Care Association	CCA
Statement	Stat
<b>Q-methodology Terms as (Plummer,2012,pp.127-128) mentioned at her study</b>	
<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Correlation (inter-correlation)	The statistical comparison of one person's Q sort with another person's Q sort to determine the level of similarity or difference
Crib sheet	A set of questions used to help the process of the interpretation of factors (designed by Simon Watts)
Distribution grid	The grid produces a shape of quasi-normal distribution (bell shaped curve) into which the participants sort the statements

Factor	A viewpoint that can be considered to be part of the same „family resemblance“, represented by participants whose Q sorts are similar
Factor array	The viewpoint of the participants loading onto a factor in relation to the position of all items placed on the grid
P set	The participants in the study
Q set	The list of statements in the Q sort activity
Q sort	Data which is gathered when participants sort the statements into the distribution grid