

# Educational Leadership and Management in the Arab World: A Methodical Review

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## Abstract

Most of the literature on educational leadership and management focuses on developed countries. This review collects documents, examines them, and critically analyzes the research literature on educational leadership in Arab countries in order to identify their key strengths and weaknesses. An analysis of 48 articles indicates that the majority of Arab educational leadership research focuses on identifying leadership styles and orientations and identifying the barriers that educational leaders face when applying leadership models derived from Western scholarship. A discussion of management practices and perceptions was also conducted both during routine periods and during periods of reform. Based on this analysis, a number of theoretical, conceptual, and methodological limitations have been identified that prevent researchers from predicting or explaining Arab educational leadership. Thus, this review represents another effort to contribute to the body of knowledge about EDLM by identifying particular trends, perspectives, practices, insights, and problems in non-Western educational systems, in line with Brooks and Jean-Marie (2015). Examining the state of EDLM in Arab countries may challenge the epistemology and interpretation of theories and concepts in this field. In addition, policymakers may gain a better understanding of how cultural and social contexts may influence educational leadership in Arab countries.

**Keywords:** educational leadership, geographical and cultural context, transformational approaches, administration, policy making, management in education.

The education literature has presented a range of perspectives on leadership, especially since the early 1990s, when educational leadership and management (EDLM) gained prominence (e.g., Garratt & Forrester, 2012). Consequently, several leadership models have been developed, including "cultural," "transformational," "moral," and "instructional," to suggest the "correct" leadership style and ideal leader-follower relations in educational institutions (Stoll & Temperley, 2009; Furman, 2012). The concept of equity and equality is reflected in several educational systems' collaborative, developmental, and transformational approaches to EDLM (Fletcher, Greenwood, Grimley, & Parkhill, 2011; Lindsey & Lindsey, 2011; Khasawneh, Al-Omari, & Abu-Tineh, 2012; Yang, 2014). This study was undertaken within the context of these efforts to diversify the global knowledge base (Clarke and O'Donoghue, 2017; Hallinger and Bryant, 2013a; Mertkan et al., 2017; Oplatka and Arar, 2016). More specifically, this systematic review synthesized trends in published EDLM research from Arab societies.

## Statement of the Problem

Research on EDLM has focused mainly on the social and organizational frameworks of Western educational institutions. Despite this, educational systems differ greatly across nations and are arranged in very different ways (Bowers et al., 2005; Bowers, Dimmock, & Barnett, 2015). Sociological, cultural, and national factors all have an impact on education, at least in part. Educational leaders' attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral standards are shaped by their cultural environments, which may differ substantially from those of their counterparts in other contexts (Heck, 1996). Therefore, it is essential to examine the role of

educational leadership across a wide range of geographical and cultural contexts, as Sinha (2013) emphasized. Corroborating the context of Arab societies, this study tends to critically analyze the research literature on educational leadership in Arab countries to identify their key strengths and weaknesses.

## Objectives of the Study

Even though research on EDLM has grown significantly in Western nations since the 1990s (Hallinger, 2013; Brooks & Jean-Marie, 2015), little is known about this phenomenon in developing countries, let alone in Arab nations. Therefore, this study aimed to critically evaluate the existing research on EDLM in Arab countries and the systematic collection, documentation, examination, and analysis of that research.

## Research Questions

The following three questions guided this review:

1. What are the primary themes of Arab educational leadership and management literature?
2. What is the research's main points of strength and weakness regarding educational leadership and management in Arab nations?
3. What is lacking at the time this study on Arab educational leadership and management is being written?

## Significance of the Study

There are three reasons why EDLM needs to be reassessed in Arab nations. EDLM is based primarily on Western concepts that are culturally and socioeconomically distinct from those of Arab nations, where the understanding of this study originated. In Arab countries, knowledge of leadership is insufficient.

Although Arab nations differ culturally and socioeconomically, they share a common socioeconomic and cultural foundation that makes their educational systems different from those found in the industrialized world (Arar & Sultana, 2010; Arar & Oplatka, 2015). Hence, this study may shed some light on some of the features of leadership that transcend national-cultural boundaries, according to Heck (1996).

Second, Western leadership can be misunderstood as a universal structure, as it is largely based on Western literature and practice. Dimmock and Walker (1998) noted the following when examining the educational landscape over 20 years ago:

“It is the field's duty to review the focus, provenance, and applicability of the materials it creates and disseminates. In order for this to occur, research needs to expand beyond its existing, largely Western theory-based foundation and move towards incorporating more diverse viewpoints from the various cultural contexts in which educational administration occurs.” (p. 559).

Thus, this review represents another effort to contribute to the body of knowledge about EDLM by identifying particular trends, perspectives, practices, insights, and problems in non-Western educational systems, in line with Brooks and Jean-Marie (2015). Last but not least, Anglo-American paradigms have greatly influenced EDLM's development through an ethnocentric perspective (Heck, 1996, p. 76). Examining the state of EDLM in Arab countries may challenge the epistemology and interpretation of theories and concepts in this field. In addition, policymakers may gain a better understanding of how cultural and social contexts may influence educational leadership in Arab countries.

#### **Definition of terms**

**Principals:** The administrative head of a given school that provides academic support as well.

**Administrators:** The administrative head who oversees administrative tasks in school

#### **Theoretical Framework**

Almost every couple of decades, new leadership theories emerge. In the beginning, there was a theory that placed a great deal of emphasis on the traits of the leader (Terman, 1904). Leadership Style Theory (Lewin, et al., 1939) focuses on the behaviour of the leader. Next, theorists recognized the influence of the leader's surroundings on his or her decision-making and behaviour, also known as the Contingency Theory, as described by House (1971). In subsequent research, researchers focused on the "Leader-Member Exchange LMX Theory" (Dansereau, 1975), which explains how a leader behaves with his colleagues as well as the type of relationship governing those "boss and "subordinate" interactions. The theory that can constitute a theoretical framework is "transformational leadership," which emphasizes a leader's ability to motivate subordinates and colleagues rather than simply command and control (Conger, 1999). Modern or postmodern theories that have been developed for the 21st century have shifted focus from individual characteristics to group dynamics and, more importantly, recognize the contextual difficulties and cognitive complexity faced by modern leaders.

#### **Conceptual Framework**

The EDLM knowledge base has been subject to growing acceptance, if not consensus, since the mid-1990s concerning

limitations on its universality (Bajunid, 1996; Hallinger et al., 2017). Since the emergence of the theory movement in educational administration 60 years ago, scholars have been embracing the goal of portraying the rich diversity of EDLM practices and discarding images of global knowledge as a monochromatic canvas. (Bajunid, 1996; Oplatka and Arar, 2016). It has been through this paradigm shift that efforts have been made to elaborate on how culture, politics, and socio-economics shape school leadership and management (Hallinger, 2016; Oplatka and Arar, 2016, 2017).

Furthermore, as higher education systems expanded rapidly and adopted international standards of academic quality and accountability, the number of EDLM publications from developing societies increased. During the same timeframe, the World University Rankings gained traction as a normative response. In developing societies, mandatory publication in selected international refereed journals has become a widespread goal, strategy, and policy for university faculty (Mertkan et al., 2017). Mutually reinforcing trends adversely affect journal publications in developing societies (Hallinger, 2016).

The social context in which education is organized and delivered in Arab societies gives rise to an interest in studying EDLM research in those societies. As Oplatka and Arar (2017) have explained in their recent synthesis of research findings, Arab societies are united by a common religion, Islam, and cultural heritage. Features of the social context shape normative attitudes and practices in education and management (Hofsetede, 1986). A large power distance has become a socio-cultural norm in Arab societies through their adoption of unitary authority structures (Obeidat et al., 2012). Additionally, education has risen to the role of a force for social change and innovation in selected Arab societies (e.g., the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Oman, and Jordan). Thus, the examination of EDLM in Arab societies has the potential to yield distinctive findings that can enrich the global tapestry of knowledge in this field.

#### **Review of the Empirical Literature**

##### **Political, Cultural, Institutional and Religious Landscape of Arab Countries**

22 Arab League nations belong to the Arab world, including Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Somalia, along with those countries that speak Arabic as their primary language. Over half of the population is under 25, making the country home to almost 422 million people. Almaamari (2011) uses the phrase "Arab settings" to illustrate fundamental differences among Arab countries in terms of politics, economics, culture, and society. Thus, this phrase can be viewed as a manifestation of an institutionalized cultural definition institutionalised (Said, 1978).

Arab nations have differing histories, values, and religious and cultural settings despite sharing similar histories, values, and cultural backgrounds. Before Europeans arrived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these countries were part of the Ottoman Empire. Arab society at that time consisted of extended families, churches, philanthropic and educational institutions with religious motivations, and community-based organizations led by elderly people (Mazawi & Sulatan, 2010). Associative activity became more elaborate with the advent of theism, which included professional associations, unions,

charitable organizations, and cultural clubs. Following independence, Arab regimes imposed tight social restrictions out of fear of losing control and authority (Aliboni & Guazzone, 2004).

The majority of Arab countries implemented, repealed or worked around liberal policies from the 1990s until the Arab Spring in 2011. The political and governmental systems of Arab nations have generally not been democratized and, in some cases, have become more oppressive and ineffective. Additionally, many Arab governments continued to restrict economic and political liberalization initiatives despite international calls for more democratic structures and advancements in human rights (Brumberg, 2003). Islamic movements grew as a result.

As in Arab nations such as Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, and Bahrain, modernised elites manipulate fictitious democracy to rule, resulting in a hybrid kind of semi-authoritarianism (Brumberg, 2003).

Some nations, such as Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Libya, and Syria, were characterized by autocracy, either by strong ruling parties or by kingdoms. (Aliboni & Guazzone, 2004) The Arab East does not have democratic regimes, nor are they democratizing.

In some Arab nations, uprisings have recently taken place to reduce egregious social injustices and democratize the political system. The American government in some Arab nations attempted to solve poverty through the introduction of democracy. As a result, most of these countries have experienced bloodshed and civil war (e.g., Syria, Iraq, Libya) or a change of government (e.g., Egypt, Yemen). The absence of democratic values in Arab and Islamic societies, followed by a lack of Arab experts in democratic procedures and methods, appears to have contributed to the violence outbreaks in Arab and Islamic societies, according to Carothers and Ottaway (2010), whose work was published a year before the violent outbreaks.

### **Social and Cultural Landscape of Arab Countries**

Most Arab countries recognise Islam (especially those located on the Arabian Peninsula). Sunnis and Shias make up the majority of Arab nations, however. There are large Shia minorities in Iraq and Bahrain, whereas the majority of Arab nations are Sunni Muslims (Lebanon, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait also have Shia minorities). A wide variety of religious groups are found in the Arab world, including Christians, Berbers, Kurds, Turkmen, Persians, Circassians, and Buddhists (Ismael & Ismael, 2008). Despite hostilities in many Arab nations, most Christians reside in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine. Many Arab nations have adopted the religious and political cultures of Islam (Ismael & Ismael, 2008). In Saudi Arabia, Islamic doctrines develop according to conservative principles, while in Egypt and Iraq, Islamic principles are incorporated into historical and contemporary cultures. The Arab world's organizations and the nation's civil roles are heavily influenced by Islamic culture. Because of this, civil and religious ideals are constantly at odds with one another. There are also many languages and dialects spoken in the Arab world. Moroccan, Algerian, and Tunisian governments often speak Darija, which combines Arabic words with Berber words.

### **Educational Landscape of Arab Countries**

The Institute of Statistics of UNESCO (2015) estimates that adult literacy rates in the Arab world are 76.9% on average. Nonetheless, there are nearly 50% of Somalians who are illiterate, over 90% of Sudanese, Mauritians, and Yemenese, and over 90% of Israelis who are illiterate.

Young people have a higher literacy rate than adults, and the rate for adults is steadily increasing (UNESCO, 2008). Women only make up 69 % of literate adults, while men make up 100 %. There are two-thirds of females in the country. According to UN polls, Arabs read four pages a year. The publications by Fleisher (2008) report a new book for every 12,000 people.

A shortage of competent teachers, high birth rates, and poverty contribute to poor schooling standards across the Middle East and North Africa (Abdeljalil, 2004). There are many factors contributing to high student dropout rates, including inadequate school resources, long commutes from home to school, limited parental involvement in children's education, and the inability of schools to create a conducive learning environment (Heyneman, 1997; Mazawi & Sultana, 2010).

Despite the differences in their cultures, social structures, organizational structures, and political systems, Arab nations generally share a number of similar traits (Barakat, 2007; Arar & Oplatka, 2015). These nations are predominantly Arab in origin, have a strong Arabic heritage, and have significant socioeconomic disparities as well as cultural ties to other cultures. Culturally rich in the "Oriental" tradition, they have restricted political freedoms, and their socioeconomic disparities are significant. Rather than protecting human rights and freedom of expression or supporting private initiatives in politics and society, emphasis is placed on advancing the "glory" of the state and the standing of the regime (Karajah, 2007).

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

This study presents a systematic review that answers a defined research question by collecting and summarizing all empirical evidence that fits pre-specified eligibility criteria. The primary objective was to gain a clear understanding of both the past and the present. It is only through an understanding of the past that one can understand the present problems and gain a more thorough appreciation of the culture and the role of education in society's progress. On the basis of the evaluation of past experiences, this method can provide important information concerning the effects of certain past educational practices. Moreover, it develops the ability to locate, analyze and appraise historical evidence as well as the limitations of that evidence and develops a deep understanding of the roots of present-day educational problems. Additionally, it also aims to address three important questions, namely, why education works, why it resembles and why it counts.

#### **Literature Search Procedure**

In order to conduct a thorough literature review, four main stages were followed, according to Booth, Papaioannou, and Sutton's (2012) book.

#### **First Stage: Search scope-setting**

In this first stage, previous evaluations of EDLM were found and provided an indication of the number and quality of relevant primary papers (Booth et al., 2012, p. 51). After the scoping search was completed, a list of databases was created to search for key search phrases.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were listed first to help readers understand why some articles were included or excluded. A minimum of five criteria were required for inclusion: (1) works that focused on Arab countries or middle managers; (2) middle managers and school principals; (3) works published in peer-reviewed journals; (4) works published between 1990 and 2015; (5) papers written in English only, as there are few refereed Arabic journals that cannot be compared to journals in English because international measures of journal ranking (e.g., Scimago Journal & Count) cannot be applied to assessing the quality of Arabic journals. Since Arabic isn't often regarded as one of the primary means of disseminating research, it is difficult to compare the quality of journals in Arabic to those in English.

To find appropriate papers, key terms such as educational leadership, school management, educational administration, principal, assistant principal, and deputy principal, as well as the names of each of the 22 Arab countries, were utilized. Four criteria were used to exclude papers: (1) the lack of direct attention to EDLM; (2) an emphasis on general educational challenges in the Arab world; (3) the fact that EDLM is just one variable among many; and (4) comments and opinions.

### Second Stage: A Free Text Search

The paper search was conducted in two stages: manually and electronically. The first step was to read every issue of journals that contained the words "educational administration" and "comparative education" (a list of these journals can be found in the Appendix.1). A total of about 25 volumes were examined for each journal. Secondly, several databases were searched online (Social Science Citation Index, British Education Index, ERIC, Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, GreySource, EBSCO) to ensure that as many papers as possible from refereed journals were covered in this review. There were 64 articles found in this search.

A number of databases were searched in order to make sure the study included as many papers from reputable journals as possible, including Education Index, ERIC, Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, GreySource, and EBSCO. During this search, 64 items were found.

### Third Stage: Scouring the Literature

According to Booth et al. (p. 57), citation searching involves following a chain of references that cites earlier relevant studies. Out of concern that the study might miss important published studies through electronic searching, the study also focused on an author who has been highly influential in the field of EDLM in Arab countries. These two methods led to the discovery of seven more papers.

### Validation

Consultation with some colleagues was also done to ensure that any additional work that might have been missed was considered in the research on EDLM in Arab countries. In spite of the limitations imposed by correspondents' knowledge, memory, and bias (Booth et al., p. 58), this approach helped reconsider the search strategy and find papers that demonstrate Arab schools' leadership role in adopting computerization and internet communication technologies (ICT).

When a publication's research strategy was inadequate, it was considered to exclude it from the study in order to avoid common review mistakes (e.g., inadequate elaboration of

methods and validation techniques). As a result of geographic reasons, 24 papers were removed during the data analysis from a total of 72. These included publications about Arab educational leaders in Israel, which is not an Arab country, overemphasizing teachers rather than leaders, multiple articles reporting the same study's findings (one of which was omitted), articles reporting principal preparation programs, and articles with multiple groups of participants that are unable to differentiate the performance of the leaders. Consequently, the design and analysis of the research were comprehensively reviewed.

In addition, all English-language journal articles mentioning EDLM in Arab nations were searched until all potential sources were located. For this study, 48 papers were selected, ranging from the earliest to the most recent (16 qualitative, 28 quantitative, and 5 mixed-methods). While it is true that no review can possibly include all the studies done on a given topic, it is true that no review could ever be comprehensive or comprehensive enough.

### Presentation of Data

Most recent studies on EDLM in Arab countries were compiled using narrative synthesis, which is suitable for analyzing data from multiple types of empirical research and allows for descriptive rather than statistical analysis of heterogeneity" (Booth et al., 2012). First, each paper was reviewed to determine its contribution to the field's understanding of EDLM and to contextualize its findings. In order to track publication themes, strengths, and weaknesses, the aforementioned research questions were used. The results of this review were then analyzed to identify significant patterns in the research. To determine what is missing from the Arab EDLM literature, major topics from the EDLM literature in English-speaking countries were compared with the reviewed articles. As a result, a preliminary framework of themes and data was developed, which was then updated after looking at articles (Table 1).

### Data analysis

EDLM in Arab nations has been reviewed in systematic form and there are three major themes that emerged from it:

1. leadership styles and models in education
2. Innovations, adjustments, and educational leadership
3. Perceptions of organizational and managerial issues by leaders

Each topic is introduced by a short theoretical introduction followed by several sub-themes that present empirical data.

### Theme 1: Leadership Styles and Models in Education

There are several definitions of leadership because leadership is a vague concept and a scholarly field (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). In Chemers' words, "leadership is enlisting the support and cooperation of others to accomplish a common goal" (1997, p. 1). The definition of leadership by Robbins and Judge (2012) is similar to this: "the ability to convince a group of the value of a vision or goals." Organizational literature identifies many organizational phenomena such as charismatic, transformative, and authentic leadership according to trait, behavioural, and contingency theories.

Schools examine leadership in the context of its intense contextualization so that its analysis is closely correlated with the organization, the method of delivery of instruction, and the

social values that pervade the school community (Garratt & Forrester, 2012). During the study of this topic, three sub-themes were identified as leadership constructs or styles: shared leadership versus authoritative leadership; instruction-focused leadership, and transformative leadership versus moral leadership. Table 4.02 presents the consistency of papers for each sub-theme.

### **Shared versus Authoritative**

Arab EDLM researchers seem keenly interested in the subtheme of shared leadership style versus authoritative leadership style (Table 2).

School administrators faced challenges implementing shared leadership at the school level in six of the articles which examined authoritative leadership at the school level.

### **School-level Authoritative Leadership**

Researchers examined six studies of authoritative leadership among Arab educators, which found that there was a positive and negative sequence to it. In spite of the fact that they used a variety of theoretical and methodological frameworks to analyze principal leadership styles, two of them specifically looked at former principals' leadership styles. This is why Akkary (2014) found that while 53 Lebanese school principals in his study had many similarities to their Western counterparts, Lebanon's social, political, and cultural context shapes their roles and responsibilities. It's interesting to note that these workers perform their duties authoritatively and "hold uniquely craft conceptions" of their work (p. 718) compared to their Western counterparts. Based on the results of Al-Chibani and Al-Chibani (2013), although the structural frame (i.e., directive-oriented and task-oriented) was rated by teachers as the best leadership frame, the human resource frame (i.e., human and considerate-oriented) was rated highest by principals as the best leadership frame.

In addition to strong leadership, other officeholders can contribute to decision-making as well. It was concluded by Hammad and Norris (2009) that school principals, assistant principals, department heads, board members and newly appointed Egyptian teachers tend to adopt top-down decision-making approaches when conducting interviews with 85 participants in the study. Hammad and Norris (2009) found a pattern of centralised control at the school level. It is not uncommon for "regular" teachers to participate in departmental meetings that deal with instructional and administrative issues, but as a result of their membership on the school board, assistant principals and department heads are frequently involved in decisions that affect the entire school.

Although some academics use related concepts to evaluate authoritative leadership styles, the effects of authoritative leadership styles on people and organizations were considered. A significant correlation was found between some dependent variables and this style, although no significant correlation was found for others. The first step in Al-Omari's (2013) investigation was to examine how 108 school principals in Jordan, 60 of whom were men and 48 who were women, made decisions and led their schools. It was found that principals tend to make direct decisions with a mean score of 60.37 (SD = 31.82). Principals scored 24.25 (SD = 2.57), indicating the most prevalent leadership style was 'constituency-centered administration' (5.5). Despite this, there is an obvious flaw in the study, according to the researcher, which is the small sample size for each style of decision. As a result, significant correlation coefficients are less likely to be obtained.

Academic achievement and institutional change were examined in two studies. Kuwait was compared to the USA and the principal's leadership style was examined to determine its impact on student achievement (Al-Safran, Brown, & Wiseman, 2014). While Kuwaiti school principals typically exercise authority, statistics show that teams work well together in both schools. It was concluded by the researchers that the US model cannot be applied to Kuwait because culture greatly impacts the principal's leadership style. The authors also noted that the authority of a principal is often necessary to achieve high school outcomes in certain cultures. It is likely that the manner in which this explanation is presented will differ from culture to culture based on perceptions of relationships, power, and authority at work. The authority position of principals is more important in societies where hierarchical power is highly valued (such as Kuwait).

Sixty-one Lebanese school principals and teachers received three questionnaires mailed by Ghamrawi (2013) to collect data. These questionnaires included a University of Exeter Leadership Style Survey. According to the study's results, school administrators' forceful leadership styles are related to "their negative views about ICT for educational purposes" (p. 11).

### **Shared Leadership and Adoption-related Challenges**

Teachers are empowered to act independently when they are involved in the decision-making process through shared leadership (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Although its use in Arab countries is quite limited, three of the seven papers that studied it reported its popularity among administrators and teachers. According to Al-Safran et al. (2014), Kuwait and the USA encourage cooperation in a 100 % way and there is also evidence that real cooperation is similar. However, two papers went further in discussing cooperation and decision-making (92.6 % in Kuwait and 90.7 % in the USA). The study by Alsaeedi and Male (2013) interviewed eight Kuwaiti principals from elementary and secondary schools. Teachers and counselors are highly valued in the schools, and therefore they should be empowered, encouraged, and ultimately motivated. Furthermore, they encouraged stakeholders and environmental constituencies to participate in decision-making processes, supported shared leadership, and created a shared vision. Globalization and reform initiatives were identified as factors that motivated principals to engage in particular forms of shared leadership in their roles.

In addition, Moroccan female principals emphasized the importance of ties to their communities and group decision-making in their leadership reflections. Among the female administrators, one described her leadership style as participative and claimed that listening, communicating, and setting an excellent example contributed to her success and high self-esteem. As a leader of the school and community, an influential principal should have community support, trust, and influence. Elmeski (2013) describes how she strengthens neighbourhood ties by consoling her team in times of happiness or grief.

Even though shared forms of leadership are more prevalent in Arab societies, they are hindered by highly hierarchical and bureaucratic educational systems (for example, Moroccan education is highly bureaucratic and limited in autonomy; Elmeski, 2013). The centralized control of the district office and its implications were explored in two studies that addressed

shared decision-making and decentralization of authority. A number of factors either facilitated or hindered Egyptian teachers' involvement in school decision-making (SDM) in 2009, as Hammad and Norris (2009) identified. In addition to their reluctance to participate, they do not trust the school community, they are unfamiliar with SDM procedures, they are under the control of the District Office, and they are restricted from tackling routine and unimportant issues. This resulted in the principals feeling powerless, frustrated, and unable to make important decisions on their own.

Decentralization cannot be implemented in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) according to research by Al Taneiji and McLeod (2008). In relation to hiring, retaining, and instructional issues, the majority of comments focused on the limited authority granted to principals; this reflects the control and authority held by local educational authorities at the time of the study. Since most decisions are made outside of the school, collaborative decision-making is severely restricted in this situation.

Empirical studies that focus on the career or job of a principal in a specific nation clearly demonstrate the negative effects of overly centralized educational systems. Akkary (2014) asserts that Lebanon's type of school greatly affects how much external control it has. In addition to managing and funding public schools, the Ministry of Education (MOE) determines course content and textbooks as well as establishing and managing policies, managing expenditures, and hiring faculty. It also maintains a watchful eye over the institution. Teachers and students are hired and fired by private schools, disciplinary policies are established and enforced, budgetary priorities are made, and textbooks are chosen by principals.

Rbaba'h (2013) found that Jordanian teachers and inspectors were highly satisfied with the principals' commitment to their duties. As a result of the inspectors' evaluations, the school principal scored higher than the rest of the administrators in the administrative field (3.71). It is the researcher's belief that this result is due to the commitment of school principals to their own work. When speaking with principals, educational directorates emphasize administrative and supervisory responsibilities more than academic responsibilities.

### **Instruction-Focused Leadership**

Originally developed in the 1980s, the instructional leadership model emphasizes the teaching and learning process as the core technology of the school through the development of academic culture in the classroom, curriculum development, assessment, and instructional vision (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Three papers examined the views of Arab stakeholders and school staff regarding instruction in general and principals in particular in ten papers that were peer-reviewed. This role was also examined in practice in the Arab countries investigated in these papers, and significant difficulties were observed in instructional leadership. As stated in the introduction of this study, studies have sometimes focused more on the leadership component than the teaching and learning capabilities of this fundamental technology. There were several studies that examined attitudes as well as the management of a particular project by educational leaders. Additionally, it provides insight into the leadership perspectives and educational philosophies of the leaders by understanding their views and perceptions of the programs.

A 6-year-old oral health promotion program that was implemented in Saudi Arabian schools was analyzed by Ibrahim, Tikare, Togo, Shahrani, and Ravi (2013) with the intention of identifying principals' perceptions. In the first week, the program provided dental inspections and referrals, while in the second week, oral health education was provided using audio-visual aids. Furthermore, it was found that children became more aware of oral health because of the program. Based on the researchers' hypothesis, the principals may perceive the program positively based on the students' enthusiastic participation and positive attitudes toward it.

Despite the fact that one study used the term "instructional leadership" even though its focus was elsewhere, three pieces indirectly addressed this topic by presenting insight into the instructional role of Arab principals from various theoretical perspectives. As a result, Al-Mhelby, Al-Muqate, and Al-Dhafisi's (2004) study, which conducted interviews with Kuwaiti principals and department heads, revealed that school administrators believed they were responsible for visiting classrooms regularly, assessing teachers' and students' performance, and assisting teachers in stimulating and supporting their students' cognitive abilities (e.g., by asking thought-provoking questions and using teaching aids). As a result of their limited administrative authority and heavy workload, participants felt they were not able to foster creativity in the classroom. A study conducted by Mattar (2012a) compared five high-performing schools with five low-performing schools in Lebanon indicating that a principal's leadership style was one of the factors affecting school performance (p. 259). Teacher researchers who researched the causes of high-achieving schools indicate the second factor of success is having a good principal-teacher relationship and maintaining tight control over the teaching process. It concerns the implementation of the new curriculum in the classroom. Researchers acknowledge that one of the study's shortcomings was the lack of involvement from Lebanese employees, concerned about their careers and reputations.

As Al-Jaber (1996) notes, curriculum development, staffing, supervision of instruction, and teacher evaluation are the most important aspects of the principal's leadership duties. Negotiations with unions, safety standards, collegiality, and issues related to racial and ethnic minorities were rated as the least important factors. It is thus logical to conclude that principals' standards were more closely scrutinized by superintendents and teachers than by themselves, showing that principals have conservative views.

In two studies, educational leaders' practices were examined to see how they affected their instructional leadership. The qualitative study of 13 female preschool leaders in Saudi Arabia conducted by Alameen, Male, and Palaiologou (2015) revealed that a small number exhibit various leadership styles. In order to develop relationships and involve others freely in school decision-making, they seem adaptable and capable of developing a vision and mission, making any decisions they want without being restricted, and establishing a vision and mission. Study findings regarding pedagogical leadership practices in preschool settings were influenced by interactions between the leaders and school community members, including students, parents, teachers, and others like superintendents and social workers.

According to Rbaba'h (2013), Jordanian principals remain committed to their assignments in the second study according to their managers. Research shows that educational supervisors are more interested in academic issues, whereas principals have a greater emphasis on administrative issues. As a result of the principal's familiarity with the teachers, students, and what works for them, as well as what their parents want, the item "distributes the syllabus to the teachers" has a mean score of (4.53) and a high commitment level. It appears that the principal believes that classroom observation belongs to the supervisor, as this item had the lowest rank (2.90).

The limited adoption of instructional leadership in Arab educational systems is explained by four studies from two Arab countries. Those in Kuwait understand the more complex thinking activities students engage in, according to Al-Mhelby et al. (2004), and they believe they "can make a significant contribution by allowing teachers the freedom to be creative in class, by sharing expert knowledge with them, by monitoring their students, and by encouraging and assisting them in further developing their students' thinking skills." They argue, however, that their job is difficult due to their lack of authority, the considerable amount of management work they have to perform, and the limited amount of time they have to complete the curriculum.

According to Khalifa, Bashir-Ali, Abdi, and Arnold (2014), Somalian school principals are unlikely to provide instructional support for their teachers or to promote student achievement and school growth. Many of them were unclear about what an improvement plan was (e.g., enforcing rules), and they believed they were responsible for overseeing and upholding school policies. There were only a few who expressed certain concepts of spirituality and religious education as principles of instructional leadership. The authors concluded that primary professional training should be reevaluated and redefined for the nation.

Two additional studies of instructional leadership in Arab schools have been conducted in Lebanon. As a result of inadequate instructional leadership and low student achievement in disadvantaged communities, Mattar (2012b) identified a number of obstacles to high student achievement. As a result of low teacher salaries and political pressure, some schools are hiring teachers who are unqualified for the job despite low pay. It is true despite the fact that many teachers are employed by public schools (due to nepotism, for example). Teacher complaints in schools with low test scores also included absentee parents who neglected to attend meetings, did not inquire about their children's progress, and did not return urgent phone calls from the principal.

In addition, it was found that principals' responsibilities in terms of education received little attention (Akkary, 2014). Rather than being in charge of each school's operation, principals will oversee it all. Teachers need to schedule their classes, select exams, and select textbooks in order to plan the school year. They were actually aware of the fact that, among other things, they were responsible for supervising school staff, including ensuring that the curriculum was adhered to as well as evaluating the performance of teachers based on students' test grades (p. 737). In the public sector, the central office is responsible for setting the curriculum, assessing student performance, deciding how to respond to poor performance, selecting equipment for schools, and allocating resources to

maintain school buildings. However, they also considered it their duty to support their teachers and guide them.

### **Dimensions of Moral and Transformative Leadership**

The transformational leadership paradigm, which asserts that successful leaders must create visions, stimulate their intellect, and concern individuals, has been gaining increasing attention in the last few decades (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). The concept of leadership in education was changed twenty years later as a new concept focused on transformational leadership, as well as moral and social justice issues related to equality, discrimination, equity, and class (Lindsey & Lindsey, 2011; Khasawneh et al., 2012). Even though the majority of studies on these factors have been conducted in Western countries, this study found nine that explicitly or implicitly investigated moral or transformational leadership in Arab countries.

Based on Western academic definitions, two papers examined how transformational leadership can be applied to the educational system local to the author. The study of Abu-Tineh, Khasawneh, and Al-Omari (2008) revealed that 550 Jordanian school principals had some extent of experience with Kouzes and Posner's (1995) transformational leadership paradigm. Female primary school teachers rated their principals' transformational leadership more highly than male high school teachers, which is consistent with findings by Kouzes and Posner. On the other hand, how well Kouzes and Posner's leadership model were applied was not affected by a teacher's tenure. Towards the low end of the moderate spectrum, the realization of a shared vision is located.

Saudi Arabian principals, according to Alsaedi and Male (2013), believe transformational leadership is essential for addressing issues in the classroom because it is better suited for addressing social issues. To address the demands of globalization and educational reform, they acknowledged the need for transformational leadership behaviours, but they identified a number of obstacles (e.g., differences between teachers and principals regarding academic preparation and skills, and heavy workloads). Considering the individual consideration aspect of the transformational leadership paradigm, the principals expressed their concern for the development of individuals within their schools.

It has only been examined in two studies (Khasawneh et al., 2012) how transformational leadership affects both internal and external factors in organizations. Researchers found that, among 340 vocational teachers in Jordan, "transformational leadership and organizational commitment exist strongly, positively, and significantly" (p. 503). Generally, school administrators exhibit transformational leadership behaviours at a moderate to high level. Based on these results, vocational teachers appreciate principals who are clear about the vision, force followers to focus on their jobs, demonstrate empathy for others, and pay attention to less involved teachers.

In a similar manner, Sheikh and Mohamud (2015) examined 210 teachers from 20 secondary schools in Mogadishu, Somalia, regarding their job satisfaction with transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire management styles. As a result of the regression analysis, the transactional leadership style accounted for 15% of teacher satisfaction variance, while the transformational leadership style accounted for 14%. There was a 47% variance in teacher satisfaction that could be accounted for by the laissez-faire style. Transformative

leadership does not seem to be having a major impact on Somalian teachers, as the authors do not explain why.

A study conducted in Jordan that evaluated teachers' perceptions of servant leadership practices, although the term "transformational leadership" was not used, highlighted the importance of intellectual stimulation (Salameh, 2011). Serving others requires respect, community, sincerity, utilizing leadership philosophies, and exercising leadership. Other characteristics of servant leadership include fostering their development, fostering development, and fostering community. Based on the responses of all participants, servant leadership was described as moderately effective (mean score 3.54; standard deviation 0.133). In some degree, servant leadership characteristics were utilized, such as valuing others, developing human potential, and providing leadership.

Two publications mentioned inclusion, poverty, and underprivileged areas, although no articles employed the notion of moral leadership for social justice, which dominates U.S. literature about EDLM (Lindsey & Lindsey, 2011). It has been reported that Lebanese teachers and principals have a positive attitude regarding integrating children into the classroom, according to Kochen and Radford (2011). It was specifically highlighted by the principals that more and better training is needed in order to increase the number of qualified teachers, how mainstream schools can handle various types of disabilities, how difficult they find it to integrate staff inclusion, and whether parents of non-disabled students are willing to send their children to school with disabled students. Their findings revealed that a lack of funding, human resources, training, and educational resources hindered more inclusive practices.

Based on Elmeski's (2013) analysis of Moroccan principals' accounts of their schools and the local environment, Moroccan principals frequently voiced concerns about difficult home situations and dysfunctional neighbourhoods. Consequently, principals took action to improve the lives of their students. Underserved communities were defined by principals as being approachable, adaptable, assertive, and genuinely motivated to improve society. Based on Harris and Chapman's (2002) study dealing with difficult circumstances in English schools, these characteristics are consistent.

In two publications discussing teacher leadership, there are some elements of moral and transformative leadership. In the first article, Hamrawi focuses on trust as an important factor in the development of teacher leadership in Lebanon (Ghamrawi, 2011).

Through modelling specific leadership behaviours and empowering teachers to suggest programs based on their own reflective practice, principals foster trust by creating a respectful environment that encourages teachers to exchange ideas.

A second study by the same author (Ghamrawi, 2010) concluded that subject leaders obstruct or support teacher leadership in three ways: (1) fostering professional collaboration subcultures that facilitate the development of shared goals, generate energy, and foster respectful and trusting relationships among school members. The department's leadership structures need to be bartered so every member can assume leadership roles, and the department should sincerely strive to work collaboratively. In addition, moral leadership enables subject leaders to bring together instructors around a common ethos of caring, concern,

and dedication.

## **Theme 2: Innovations, Adjustments, and Educational Leadership**

There have been a number of factors affecting governments since the early 1990s, including increasing social and political demands in local communities, fierce global competition, economic globalization, technological advancements, marketization of the public sector, and others. These factors have led governments in almost every country on the planet to implement a variety of reforms to improve the effectiveness of educational systems. Therefore, many Western countries are researching the implementation and integration of reforms, including the ways in which to manage, absorb, and establish a change in education (Evans, 2013), among other things (Fullan, 2011).

During the analysis of reforms and EDLM in Arab nations, two subthemes were identified. Several articles discuss the adoption of regional reforms and the perspectives of educational leaders (seven articles), along with five articles about the use of technology by Arab educational leaders (five articles). In order to illustrate the significant influence of computerisation on Arab educational leaders, it was felt necessary to separate data regarding general reforms and changes from those regarding specific types of changes—technological ones.

### **Educational Leaders' Perceptions of Reform Implementation**

Four papers examined how local government reforms were perceived by school officials and others. Several focus group interviews with six principals and five teachers were conducted after the Ministry of Education in the United Arab Emirates announced a shift from a centralised educational system to a decentralized system. In order to get a better understanding of how this group viewed the reform, they sought out feedback from them. There was a consensus among participants that decentralization in the UAE was "flawed" (p. 283). There was also a perception that the MOE had not adequately explained the goals of decentralization to schools (that is, there was a lack of appropriate training). In order to achieve effective decentralization strategies, the founders contend that each issue must be resolved successfully.

During their research, Cherif, Romanowski, and Nasser (2012) examined school administrators' opinions regarding the Qatar National Professional Standard and the license system. In order to implement the standard, it was odd, since the procedures were not in line with local cultural preferences, while the license system would be appropriate. In terms of educational reform, many educators agreed that testing and standards were just one of many challenges. According to them, the system put into place did not take into account local knowledge and context.

It was revealed from the quantitative study that local reforms and educational systems are closely linked. Al-Jammal and Ghamrawi (2013a) find that most private school principals believe TQM components work well within their institutions. Nevertheless, most teachers and principals at both public and private colleges and universities considered all components of TQM ineffective. Since the study was confined to a single neighbourhood in Beirut, generalizability and validity are limited.

A study conducted by Badah (2013) found that Jordanian school principals had neither very limited use of school-based management nor it was limited to a few schools in the country. Schools and local communities have varying cultures of self-management, which posed obstacles to the implementation of the self-management approach.

It was studied how the implementation of a particular school reform affected educational leadership in two papers. Thorne (2011) used a case study approach in one UAE elementary school selected as the pilot school for testing a local reform that would apply English to the teaching of primary mathematics and science. Implementing this reform was stressful for the principal. Due to the new requirements, most instructors were not fully prepared to take on such a change, since they had to meet a specific level of English proficiency. This flaw had to be fixed as soon as possible due to pressure from the political world. As a result, the principal became increasingly frustrated, and she thought that she was being confronted with a radical and complex change.

According to Romanowski, Cherif, Al Ammari, and Al Attiyah (2013), comprehensive educational reform in Qatar resulted in improved outcomes for teachers, principals, and parents, as they examined the impact of mixed methodologies on teachers, principals, and parents. Even though they acknowledge their roles have changed and they have a lot more responsibilities (like teacher evaluation and strategy planning) than prior to the reform, most principals supported the reform. Also, they knew the reform required more democratic management practices (e.g., delegation of responsibilities). A final requirement is better communication between students and parents (even though many parents do not attend meetings).

As change agents, principals were examined in two studies that drew on literature on educational change. An analysis of 40 principals was conducted, as well as interviews with 10 people working in various EDLM roles. The principals took concrete steps toward reform as early as 2012 according to Mohamed and Al-Mashhadany (2012). Due to the study's identification of a gap in reform implementation practice, additional programs were necessary, particularly those related to local authorities' strategic plans. Researchers claimed they were unable to extrapolate the findings from the study's sample of principals to other educational settings due to the study's sample size.

School principals are also examined in Al-Omari (2012) to determine their level of implementation of transformational change. Essentially, "this type of change" encompasses all resources that can be used to perform a variety of tasks in a variety of contexts, learn needed information, and achieve desired outcomes. A person's ability and skill to think, function, and relate to others is also included. Transformational change was seen as more common among principals than among teachers ( $M = 3.85$  and  $3.43$ , respectively). No observable effects were observed on transformational change application based on gender, educational attainment, or work history.

### **Technology's Role in Arab EDLM**

Global educational landscapes are being transformed by the innovative information era at present. To support students' learning and help them reach their educational goals in the twenty-first century, electronic tools must be used effectively in routine classroom activities and in school management (Darling-Hammond, 2009).

It is widely acknowledged that computers have made a critical contribution to the enhancement of education all over the world, and Arab countries are no exception (OECD, 2001). Other studies investigated educational leaders' perspectives on the integration of technology into schools and the computerization of education, while three studies examined the relationship between leadership style and ICT (information and communication technology).

During the ICT implementation process, educational leaders should provide teachers with the appropriate incentives and rewards (such as praising them for their efforts in the morning assembly), moral support, and encouragement, as well as ICT training workshops for those who need them, according to Abdul Razzak's (2013) assistant principals. Among other things, they recommended creating a cogent school vision that would motivate, inspire, and push teachers and staff toward ICT integration as one of the solutions to the problems with ICT integration. Two additional articles discussed how school administrators view technology. Derar (2007) discovered that UAE principals were generally supportive of using technology in the classroom. The principals wanted to encourage the use of technology in their schools and improve staff knowledge and skills in order to make it easier to integrate it into the local curriculum. They were motivated to introduce new technologies into their classrooms, though, after taking a training session meant to reduce their technology anxiety. They saw technology as a way to encourage kids to learn in an engaging environment, which would ultimately improve student achievement.

From Jabbour's (2013) mixed-method study of 50 Lebanon public school principals, similar conclusions were drawn. Participants who have a favourable perception of ICT use technology more frequently than those who do not. According to the results of the chi-square test, people's past experiences with technology had an impact on how valuable they thought information technology was. The majority of the principals (87%) believed that technology was useful, whether they were experienced or novice users of information technology.

The relationship between leadership philosophies and methods and ICT adoption in educational settings was examined in three articles, the first from Lebanon and the other two from Kuwait. Ghamrawi (2013) asserts that there is a correlation between administrators' attitudes toward ICT use in the classroom and the actual use of the technology by teachers. To put it another way, school leaders who don't value technology are less likely to encourage its use in their organization. Teachers who answer to those administrators at the school would be discouraged from using it in these situations. However, the authors cautioned that more research is needed to fully explore this particular association.

The local Ministry of Education identified two articles from secondary schools in Kuwait that were among the best at utilizing ICT to shed light on how EDLM impacts ICT adoption. Al Sharija and Watters (2012) found that teachers recognized the positive impact that their principals' leadership styles had on the adoption of ICT in their school through three major and effective strategies: i. motivating teachers to engage with the change associated with the introduction of ICT; ii. supporting teachers to adopt ICT in their classrooms by providing professional development opportunities and providing teachers with necessary resources; Similar findings were made by Al Sharija and Qablan (2012), who found that principals

encouraged teachers to use ICT in the classroom and provided guidance on how to do so. The principal was required to prioritize ICT requirements, provide ICT infrastructure, and prioritize ICT requirements in order to reduce the negative effects of having insufficient resources for the implementation process.

### **Theme 3: Perceptions of Organizational and Managerial Issues by Leaders**

According to the EDLM research, principals of schools worldwide are expected to handle a wide range of duties, such as goal-setting, personnel management, resource mobilization, budgeting, supervision, external relations, maintenance, and school discipline (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Since the middle of the 1990s, principals have been required to engage in marketing, public relations, teacher evaluation, school changes, networking, and local politics (Oplatka & Hemsley Brown, 2012; Murphy, Hallinger, & Heck, 2013).

The third main theme of the review was broken down into three sub-themes: Organizational and administrative issues as seen by leaders, teachers' perceptions of the principal's leadership style, and principals' actual management strategies. Although all of these sub-themes are focused on managerial issues in the real world, it was felt crucial to make a distinction between the evidence pertaining to principals' or teachers' perceptions of various organizational and managerial issues and principals' actual managerial strategies and practices because the latter is based on principals' self-reports on their own managerial behaviour, whereas the former is based on one's perceptions of environmental objects. The only study found on this topic focused on gender issues and work-family conflicts, and it looked at the challenges faced by 187 Jordanian women in secondary school academic leadership (Khaled & Al-Jaradat, 2014). This study, however, did not fit any sub-theme.

### **Leadership Perspectives on Organizational and Management Issues**

Three publications were chosen for the review because they shed light on the attitudes and actions of Arab educational leaders in the workplace. These three articles focused on the managerial and organizational challenges faced by school principals. Alghamdi and Riddick (2011) found that Saudi Arabian administrators were aware of the significance of principals in their schools and placed a high value on their responsibilities with regard to academic, psychological, and behavioural issues. They gave the least importance to the tasks involving using inventories to assess students' developmental needs and personality traits, letting students know about options for continuing their education after junior high school and interacting with parents.

Al-Ali (2014) found that Jordanian primary school principals had strong research skills because they understood how academic research could improve administration and be used to carry out various educational and instructional activities in the classroom. The results also revealed that while there are statistical differences connected to scientific training or experience in school administration, there are none associated with gender disparities in the study sample averages, favouring men. The third paper examined institutional performance from the perspectives of 90 school principals in order to assess the effectiveness of institutional performance in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia. The first two publications, however, focused on a clearly perceived object (Abu-Nasser, 2009). It was

established that institutional performance efficiency is actually quite low and that there are no obvious variations in institutional performance based on education and experience. Due to the study's focus on a single district and its limited assessment of institutional effectiveness, it has some limitations.

### **Teachers' Opinions of the pPrincipal's Leadership Style**

According to EDLM research, five publications looked at EDLM from the perspective of the followers, or the professors (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Oplatka, 2010). However, not only teachers are considered to be able to provide trustworthy information regarding these leaders' communication and behavioural beliefs because of their frequent interactions with them. Two papers, with entirely distinct theoretical backgrounds, focused on teachers' perceptions of EDLM as a whole. In contrast to male leaders, their male teachers' reports, and their female teachers' reports, female leaders, their female teachers' reports, and their male teachers' reports devalued their leadership efficacy, claims Abu-Tineh (2013) (p. 503). While female instructors rated their female leaders as somewhat effective, male teachers rated their male leaders as highly effective to moderately effective in their evaluations of their male leaders. According to a t-test analysis, no statistically significant differences between the sexes were found in their skills or in how well they were judged for their leadership.

According to Al-Omari and Wuzynani (2013), "personal and professional difficulties" and "want to be a leader and achieve self-actualization" were the top reasons for seeking a principalship, followed by "strategic influence on education" and "desire to widen career opportunities." 200 teachers from each of Jordan and Saudi Arabia participated in the study, which compared their perspectives on principalship. Salary was only the ninth most often cited deterrent factor in this study. Four of the eleven characteristics that could discourage teachers from taking on the post of principal—"highly stressful," "large time commitment," "accountable for accomplishment," "amount of paperwork," and "accountable for achievement"—were rated as "high level" (p. 482) There were no significant differences in the participants' countries of origin.

Three papers looked at how professors felt about various management techniques. Al-Hajaya and Al-Roud (2011) discovered statistically significant differences in the means of administrative creativity skills for public school administrators in Jordan based on the interaction of experience and scientific training. Those with fewer than five years of experience and a bachelor's degree or less were more likely to demonstrate greater innovative talents in contrast to their counterparts with various levels of experience and education.

Al-Taneiji (2013) sampled 377 teachers in a similar manner and found that principals used a variety of tactics to involve parents in the school, such as "providing them with information on a good study environment at home, books to read to their children, and tapes and flyers on how to raise children" (p. 286). Additionally, it was noted that administrators frequently requested that teachers contact parents via the school phone, despite the fact that parents prefer informal interactions with teachers. This was done in an effort to help parents establish good attitudes toward the school.

In the final section, it was hoped to clarify how principals may help high schools in Oman's society by fostering better interpersonal ties (Alarimy, Juma, & Ibrahim, 2012). The results

showed that enabling, participation, communication, incentives, and professional development all had an effect on how teachers and administrators experienced their jobs. The same is true for leaders in elementary schools, who usually collaborate with seasoned bosses and teachers rather than novice students.

### **Real Managerial Techniques and Methods Used by Principals**

The five reviewed articles examined managerial strategies and tactics employed by leaders in education from various theoretical and conceptual perspectives. Only one essay approached EDLM holistically, while the other four focused on a different managerial strategy. Akkary (2014) found that Lebanese principals' duties also included interacting with students, building relationships with parents and the neighbourhood, monitoring teacher effectiveness, and communicating with their superiors. One of the principals' main goals, in their eyes, was to make the school staff feel comfortable working there (for instance, by scheduling the teachers' schedules, giving them tasks, and "presiding over curriculum planning meetings to ensure alignment with the officially mandated curriculum," p. 738). Principals also thought that it was their responsibility to evaluate the work of the instructors (for example, by looking at the test results and study materials of the students). However, the bulk of the principals' responsibilities were managing routine administrative activities (such as fund-raising, filing, and reporting to superiors about the institution's needs and operations).

The four articles that follow, however, each provide insight into a managerial strategy or method used by Arab leaders. As a result, Abu-Nasser (2011) demonstrated that one of the most important time management strategies used by Saudi Arabian administrators is ensuring that teachers are competent to carry out their teaching responsibilities, or more specifically, that they correctly complete the task assigned to them. The main impediment to effective time management was the insufficient training provided to school principals, which was meant to establish scientific time management approaches (such as how to deal with time) in the principals' work habits.

Al-Jaradat and Alkilani (2015) discovered that among Jordanian principals, students' problem-solving, teachers' problem-solving, school environment and supply problem-solving, and finally, teacher problem-solving were all among the most efficient leadership strategies for resolving educational issues. Resolving neighbourhood difficulties and parent worries, on the other hand, came in fourth and last. The least effective leadership strategies in this area involved offering technology and enticing parents to contribute to the school; nevertheless, those that had a practical approach to resolving teachers' problems and support for new teachers performed best. Contrarily, establishing a regular parents' council and providing guidance to parents on how to address their children's concerns were the most successful methods for resolving the neighbourhood's problems.

Based on open-ended interviews with Omani primary school administrators, Al Ghanabousi and Idris (2010) discovered that principals develop performance targets for teaching and learning in the classroom but not through any systematic plan preparation. Principals are hindered from conducting efficient performance evaluations by a number of variables, including centralization policies, a lack of time owing to their multiple responsibilities, a lack of district assistance, and ineffective

training on evaluation methodologies and processes.

Finally, a fascinating study by Al-Jammal and Ghamrawi (2013) of 300 private school leaders from Lebanon and the UAE (150 from each nation) found that out of the 33 social media platforms mentioned in the survey, Lebanese school administrators mostly use Facebook, Skype, Google, and YouTube. However, the majority of school administrators in the United Arab Emirates utilize the following 16 social media sites: Skype/Google, RSS Feeds, Facebook, Blogger, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Yahoo Answers, Yahoo Groups, Pinterest, and Farmville. In the UAE, it is encouraged to take courses that will advance school administrators' knowledge of how to use social media for work-related goals.

## **Results**

### **Theme 1: Leadership Styles and Models in Education**

According to reports on educational leadership in the USA during the first half of the 20th century, schools were led by authoritative leadership styles as a result of local organisational and social systems as well as cultural values. While some studies emphasized this leadership style's disadvantages (such as low staff morale and a lack of enthusiasm for implementing reforms and adopting new technologies), others showed that it is culturally compatible and therefore appears to be effective, similar to other leadership styles that are common in Western nations.

Similarly, Arab educational systems are heavily centralized, which prevents the emergence of this style in Arab classrooms despite positive sentiments towards a shared leadership style. Cultural scripts that promote hierarchical systems and strict deference to authority are prevalent. It should not be surprising that in the school environment, where most decisions are made, principals and teachers have limited autonomy and choice, making collaborative decision-making ineffective. In other words, unlike Western educational systems that are decentralized and support shared forms of leadership (Hoy & Miskel, 2008), Arab educational systems are entangled in a plethora of restrictions that prevent true shared decision-making in classrooms.

The current review shows that, despite the positive attitudes Arab educational leaders have toward leaders' involvement in instructional matters, the model's actual application is very limited. This result is consistent with research from Western nations conducted in the 1980s that showed a discrepancy between principals' enthusiastic views of instructional leadership and their actual participation in it (Murphy, 1990). Arab leaders support initiatives to promote health, affirm the importance of developing cognitive skills in the classroom, and demonstrate a strong commitment to completing pedagogical responsibilities in this regard. The analyzed studies show that there are many obstacles to effective instructional leadership in Arab schools, such as a lack of time, strict external control over the school, the principal's limited authority, the supervisor's instructional role, poor teacher quality, and tense relationships between the school and parents.

The articles that were reviewed could provide two insights. First, Arab educators and researchers of Arab EDLM adopted the ideas of Western academics, and regional educational systems broadly support these ideas. For instance, local educational leaders and teachers support and are aware of the importance of the following moral and transformational

leadership principles: trust, inclusion, "individual concern," and vision-building. The second observation, which follows from the first, relates to the constraints moral leaders face and the sparing application of transformational leadership in Arab educational institutions. This calls into question the applicability of leadership theories and tools in contexts other than Western cultures and emphasizes the need for greater focus on the significant impact of society's cultural and institutional arrangements on educational leadership.

### **Theme 2: Innovations, Adjustments, and Educational Leadership**

Arab educational authorities appear sceptical about implementing education reforms imported from Western nations because these reforms disregard numerous local beliefs and social structures in education. Because of this, even though some claimed to have changed their leadership approaches and initiated school reforms, including transformational ones, Arab principals encountered many challenges and hindrances while putting these reforms into practice. They were very worried about the positive effects on their respective local educational systems. After reading teachers' accounts of their principal's actions, less hope was found in this regard.

However, it should be noted that research on reforms, changes, and EDLM in Arab countries is remarkably sparse, avoiding many topics covered by Western researchers (e.g., Fullan, 2011; Evans, 2013), such as teachers' resistance to change, externally imposed changes and their implications for education and teaching, and so forth.

The articles under review demonstrated the positive attitudes held by Arab educational leaders regarding the integration of new technologies, such as ICT, in their classrooms, as well as the positive correlation between these attitudes and teachers' inclination to use technology in the classroom. These findings are consistent with past research that has demonstrated the important role principals play in bringing about technological changes (Kearney & McGarr, 2009). The publications under study also highlighted common, effective leadership strategies for advancing ICT in education, such as support, direction, training, listening, and rewards.

### **Theme 3: Perceptions of Organizational and Managerial Issues by Leaders**

Arab educational leaders share uniform organizational conceptions, with few differences based on experience and education. They believe school principals' duties are not successful and institutional performance is not efficient. In Western literature, articles about principals' perspectives on various subjects were far more common in the 1970s and 1980s than they are now (Oplatka, 2010).

Teacher-based reviewed articles contribute to understanding Arab EDLM, but conflicting data exists on teachers' assessments of managerial issues, gender, work history, and educational background.

Arab EDLM research explores the careers of Arab educational leaders using roles and practices consistent with 1980s scholarship and business administration literature. The study focuses on social media, teacher evaluation, problem resolution, time management, and supervision, with few connections between managerial practices, gender and professional experience. Most articles emphasize the importance of additional training to build competencies in the area.

### **Discussion**

This section of the study presents a few broad conclusions on the study of Arab EDLM. First, the vast majority of research on Arab EDLM has focused on either identifying patterns of leadership styles and orientations or the difficulties educational leaders face when implementing some of the leadership models originating in Western scholarship or exploring and examining leaders' managerial perceptions and practices both in times of routine and reform. Second, loads of research on EDLM in developing nations have confirmed the findings of the publications under review, which focused on the authoritative style of many Arab educational leaders (e.g., Arar & Oplatka, 2015). This may be due to the autocratic regimes and lack of democratic views in the Arab world (Hawthorne, 2004; Carothers & Ottaway, 2010).

According to American studies (e.g., Murphy, 1990), despite leaders' good attitudes toward shared, moral, and transformational leadership models, these models are only used to a low to moderate extent due to societal and cultural limitations (Oplatka & Arar, 2016; Hallinger, 2013). They live and work in a traditional society where large power distance values (i.e., less powerful members' expectations and acceptance that power is distributed unequally) prevail, so it is likely that they desire more independence and power but are aware of the limited opportunities to use it within their role (Hofstede, 1999). However, relatively few academics have used measurements of leadership styles created in Anglo-American nations to investigate the prevalence of a certain style among Arab leaders or its effects.

The second major area of study focuses on how Arab leaders and followers perceive local reforms, educational technological breakthroughs, organizational roles, and managerial approaches, as well as leaders' actual management approaches. The resistance to implementing reforms and changes that are imported from outside, cultural and social barriers to reform implementation, managerial strategies to promote technological advancements in schools, and principal practices across a variety of domains are all highlighted by this kind of research. Since understanding how EDLM is used in various countries is a major objective of study on this organizational phenomenon globally, this evaluation contributes to that information (Garratt & Forrester, 2012; Brooks & Jean-Marie, 2015).

Compared to recent EDLM literature that primarily originated in developed countries (e.g., Stoll & Temperley, 2009; Fletcher et al., 2011; Furman, 2012; Garratt & Forrester, 2012; Yang, 2014), many study areas were missing from the reviewed scholarship. This may be because they were unrelated to the cultural and political features of Arab countries, or it may be because the current research on Arab EDLM is still in its early stages of development. The fact that a large number of the publications under review address topics that Western researchers were interested in in the 1970s and 1980s may lend credence to the latter point (Oplatka, 2010). The majority of the articles concentrate on perceptions and attitudes surrounding managerial techniques, leadership ideologies, and other organizational functions and procedures because these subjects are no longer frequently covered in EL or primary ship literature (Hallinger, 2013).

The evaluated publications, in contrast, made little mention of issues that Western scholars have widely discussed, such as gender inequity, power relations in the classroom, social justice, feminism, colonialism, overt resistance to change, and the like (Arar, Shapira, Azaize, & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2013). The only exception was the research design's inclusion of "gender" as a distinct variable. The aforementioned historical traits of Arab civilizations (e.g., Said, 1978; Bardhan & Wood, 2015) could account for this, as they are known to be intolerant of novelty and difference and to discount organizational changes or gender differences (Hofstede, 1991).

Additionally, it doesn't appear that the reviewed publications are related to the distinct organizational, social, and cultural contexts of the school or to the political and social challenges faced by the study countries. To put it another way, the vast majority of reports failed to highlight the great political instability and unpredictability, racial and ethnic tensions, extreme economic inequality, and corruption that have dogged many Arab countries since their founding in the first part of the 20th century (Ismael & Ismael, 2008; Mazawi & Sultana, 2010). In this regard, the analyzed studies substantially draw upon and apply research methodologies developed in various cultural and educational contexts. None provide an approach that applies to the Arab world.

This review revealed a number of theoretical, conceptual, and methodological issues that have an impact on and, frequently, hinder researchers' ability to precisely forecast or explain the nature of Arab EDLM. This is significant because it limits the field's potential for growth and the applicability of the findings, as the majority of the reviewed studies did not draw from the EDLM theory or any other theory.

The few articles that tried to apply a particular theory to their research also tended to use teachers and outdated leadership models (such as characteristics or situational models) as their main sources of information on leadership styles. Without taking into account local culture or social structures, their main objective was to prove or refute the theory and its hypotheses. The empirical investigation of educational leadership and management in the Arab world is still in its early phases, which is in accordance with Hallinger and Chen's (2014) assessment of the literature on educational leadership in Asia.

The ideas and studies focused on the literature on Arab EDLM also seem to be scattered, which is a sign of early academic development (Hallinger, 2013). As a result, it is not surprising that the reviewed papers largely stick to descriptive research and give scant attention to intermediate variables, which has a negative impact on the quality of the findings and limits the ability to establish causal links and significant correlations between the research topic and the independent and dependent variables. At this phase in the study, it is being questioned whether the research questions are valid (do they depend on Western-originated ideas or on local requirements and conditions?) as well as the calibre of their results.

There are a few points that demand special emphasis regarding the sample and sampling of the evaluated publications. This assessment only covers ten of the 22 Arab countries, despite the efforts to cover the study on EDLM throughout the Arab globe. Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and the UAE garnered the most attention out of these ten. Unfortunately, only Egypt has gone through the "Arab Spring" upheaval; aside from Egypt, the other

examined nations are more organized and occasionally wealthier. The majority of the Arab African nations, which are frequently very underdeveloped and have fragile political systems, are not included in this review. Second, the majority of the works were created prior to the Arab uprising because they were published between 2008 and 2013.

Third, the bulk of the authors are Arabs who reside and/or work in the country where the study was conducted, despite the fact that other authors are from England or the USA. This suggests that local and international researchers commonly work together. Researchers working in traditional communities and authoritarian regimes have to be extremely cautious about sharing findings that the government may consider provocative or at odds with local educational policies. This pattern is likely to have an impact on the distribution of authors in reviewed articles. This could account for the lack of critical analysis in most of the articles being evaluated or the adherence to tangentially linked, oftentimes bizarre, and largely Western-based study aims. The bulk of the research was quantitative and used descriptive statistics, with only a few employing contemporary methods like regression, multi-level analysis, and two-directional analysis (mostly the t-test and frequency test). A few of the examined publications also identified issues with reliability, validity, and systematic sampling. The bulk of the papers that were connected examined gender, age, and professional experience but concluded that these factors were only marginally related to the phenomenon being studied. As a result, the growing interest in evaluating the effects of leadership on educational outcomes, based on cutting-edge statistical approaches and relevant data sets has not yet benefited the research on Arab EDLM (Gumus, Bellibas, Esen, & Gumus, 2016). Open-ended questionnaires were more frequently used in face-to-face interviews than semi-structured ones, which are more typical in today's qualitative studies, which are characterized by a small number of participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Additionally, the connections between the quantitative and qualitative methodologies were very shaky, and the information gathered from each participant group was rarely compared in order to develop a cogent narrative, even when the researchers indicated that they were using mixed methods or triangulation of information sources (e.g., middle managers, teachers, and principals).

### Conclusion

This review collects, documents, examines, and critically analyses the research literature on educational leadership in Arab countries and has identified its key strengths and weaknesses. An analysis of 48 articles indicates that the majority of Arab educational leadership research focuses on identifying leadership styles and orientations and identifying the barriers that educational leaders face when applying leadership models derived from the Western scholarship. Based on this analysis, a number of theoretical, conceptual, and methodological limitations have been identified that prevent researchers from predicting or explaining Arab educational leadership.

### Limitations of the Study

The research on educational leadership in the Arab world is still limited. Most of the research papers that have been examined to investigate educational leadership are limited in scope to the school level, focusing more on principals and administrators.

### Contribution to Knowledge

This review signifies another effort to contribute to the body of knowledge about EDLM by identifying particular trends, perspectives, practices, insights, and problems in non-Western educational systems, in line with Brooks and Jean-Marie (2015). Exploring the state of EDLM in Arab countries may challenge the epistemology and interpretation of theories and concepts in this field. In addition, policymakers may gain a better understanding of how cultural and social contexts may influence educational leadership in Arab countries.

### Recommendations

The evidence for Arab EDLM is exceedingly weak, given the small number of studies that have been examined. Additionally, given the political and economic circumstances in many Arab civilizations that were thoroughly discussed in the introduction of this research, it appears that qualitative and mixed-method studies are substantially more appropriate at this moment to further examine EDLM in these countries.

### Suggestions for Further Research

The complexities of EDLM in various Arab contexts can be understood through qualitative-naturalistic studies that are highly contextualized and connect the study phenomena to larger cultural, political, organizational, and social contexts. It is crucial to hear from Arab principals, teachers, and other educational professionals in order to fully comprehend EDLM and the social mosaic that surrounds it. Additionally, it will enable comparison and contrast between the various Arab-based EDLM variations.

Second, greater in-depth investigation is likely to increase the variety of study goals and topics covered in the Arab literature surrounding EDLM and support a deeper examination of numerous correlations and cause-and-effect relationships. This will probably make some mixed-technique study designs possible. Evidently, research using multi-wave designs can provide more precise insights into the stability of the variables and relationships over time than descriptive methods. Despite the fact that it would be difficult to implement this guidance without the assistance of research institutions from the Arab world, this review showed significant international collaboration between Arab researchers and their Western counterparts.

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