

Leadership in Palestine: attitudes, obstacles and a future outlook

"Case Study"

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Abstract

The study aimed at representing the perceptions of faculty members, administrators, and university students in Palestine about the possibility of teaching and learning the concept of leadership. However, there are several downsides concerning the study; for example, there has been little research done on a better understanding of how leadership is taught and learned, what leaders need to know, the challenges they face, and how professional leadership development influences its practices. The study adopted a qualitative approach to shed light on the topic of the research, and semi-structured interviews were used as a tool for the study. Data were collected from seven participants working in academic and administrative positions and graduate students (PhD) who completed courses in educational leadership. The results showed that teaching and learning leadership in Palestine is still in its infancy, and that there is a need to prepare leaders to take charge of institutions, especially educational ones, and leads them towards change. Furthermore. The study found that there are many challenges facing teaching and learning leadership. The most crucial of which is the lack of an agreed-upon curriculum or scientific material, the lack of a clear vision in teaching leadership and the absence of influential living models that stand for effective leadership. The results of the interviews in the framework of professional leadership development revealed that there is an agreement on an urgent need for professional development and leadership training since this helps learners to internalize leadership theories in a practical way.

Keywords: *leadership, perceptions, leadership challenges, a view of the future, learning and teaching leadership*

القيادة في فلسطين تصورات، تحديات ونظرة للمستقبل "دراسة حالة"

الملخص

هدفت الدراسة إلى الكشف عن تصورات أعضاء هيئة التدريس والإداريين وطلاب الجامعات في فلسطين حول إمكانية تدريس وتعلم القيادة. وتحدد مشكلة الدراسة في أن هناك عدد قليل من الأبحاث التي أجريت حول فهم أفضل لكيفية تدريس القيادة وتعلمها، وما يحتاج القادة إلى معرفته، والتحديات التي يواجهونها، وكيف يؤثر التطوير المهني للقيادة على ممارسات القيادة. واعتمدت الدراسة المنهج النوعي في تسليط الضوء على موضوع البحث، وقد استخدمت المقابلات شبه منظمة أداة للدراسة، حيث جمعت البيانات من سبعة مشاركين يعملون في وظائف أكاديمية وإدارية وطلاب دراسات عليا (دكتوراة) أنهوا مساقات في القيادة التربوية.

أظهرت النتائج أن تدريس وتعلم القيادة في فلسطين ما تزال في خطواتها الأولى، وأن هناك ضرورة لإعداد القادة لاستلام زمام المؤسسات، خاصة التربوية منها والأخذ بها نحو التغيير. كما بينت الدراسة أن هناك الكثير من التحديات التي تواجه تدريس وتعلم القيادة وأهمها هو عدم وجود منهج أو مادة علمية متفق عليها، عدم وجود رؤية واضحة في تدريس القيادة وعدم وجود نماذج قيادية حية مؤثرة تقوم بتدريس القيادة لتعكس في نفس المتعلم القيادة الفاعلة. وأفرزت نتائج المقابلات في إطار التنمية المهنية للقيادة أن الجميع متفقون أن هناك حاجة ماسة لتطوير والتنمية المهنية والتدريب للقيادة، وأن ذلك يساعد المتعلمين على تدوير نظريات القيادة بشكل عملي.

الكلمات المفتاحية : القيادة، تصورات، تحديات القيادة، نظرة للمستقبل، تعلم القيادة، تعليم القيادة.

1. Introduction

Leadership can lead to success and excellence. Additionally, it seems to be an urgent necessity in all different areas of people's lives. This requires the presence of leaders who have the knowledge, skills and leadership qualities that qualify them to assume various responsibilities in order to reach the desired positive change. Because of the increasing demand for effective leaders, and the urgent need for those who have talent, or to prepare and develop all those who occupy leadership positions in the future to lead the institutions in a way, there is an argument that organizations face a leadership crisis;

Effective achieves the desired visions and goals (Boerma et al., 2017; Channing, 2020; Zepeda & Ponticell, 2019; Appadurai, 2009).

This opinion originates from the existence of a popular debate and controversy over whether leadership is a talent, or a skill. If it is talent, leaders are born as the "great men" theory popularized by Thomas Callell in the 1840s. Moreover, they will appear when faced with the right situation. If it is a skill; Leaders are made. Therefore, there are organizations that invest a lot of time and money to help their employees develop their leadership skills. For instance, US companies spend approximately \$14 billion annually on leadership training. As well as this, higher education there offers degree courses in leadership (Swan, 2018; Boerma et al., 2017; Gurdjian & Halbeisen, 2014).

Studies indicate that 50-75% of organizations are run by people who largely lack leadership competencies and skills. It is because they were appointed or promoted based on their technical competence or commercial, political, educational and other knowledge, not based on leadership skills and competencies that enable them to lead organizations professionally and effectively and advance them to successes (Swan, 2018; Channing, 2020).

After reviewing the literature related to the perceptions of faculty members, administrators, and university students in Palestine about leadership learning and teaching, the researchers found that there is a small number of scientific literatures on the efficiency of leadership teaching.

(Elmuti, et al., 2005; Keating, Rosch, & Burgoon, 2014; Rosenbach, 2003; Rymsha, 2013; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999).

Some studies suggest genetic factors that contribute to the existence of leadership skills and roles in a person, which have nothing to do with the “education” of leadership (Arvey, et al., 2007). The Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) study showed that leadership programs studied by leaders had significant results, with participants reporting increased self-understanding, ability to set goals, sense of morality, willingness to take risks, civic responsibility, multicultural awareness, and community orientation and a variety of leadership skills. At the same time, however, it was not mentioned or taught how these skills were reflected in the work and lives of these participants. Hackman & Wageman (2007) argues that all the research on leadership shows that the field of leadership is curiously uninformed. However, there are no generally accepted definitions of what leadership is, no prevailing models to study it, and little agreement about the best strategies for developing and practicing it (Channing, 2020). This gap widens when the picture becomes vivid that the education system in Palestine lacks leadership training centers, or even majors that higher education attaches importance to. Note that there are specializations in the administrative field, such as educational administration (Zaher, 2019).

As a result, to the previously identified knowledge gap, this study aims at discovering the perceptions of faculty members, administrators, and university students in Palestine about the possibility of teaching and learning leadership and the difficulties facing it. Building on the aforementioned central objective, this study raises the following questions: (1) what are the participants' perceptions about the necessity of preparing and teaching leaders and leadership knowledge? (2) What are the main leadership challenges that participants see? (3) To what extent do participants see the potential for leadership education? (4) What is the urgent need for professional leadership development and what areas should be developed? (5) How does leadership education manifest itself in leadership practices?

1.2 The Obstacle Facing this Study

The challenges and crises that our world is experiencing today and the accompanying alteration and development in various directions make it imperative for different institutions to stand at the administrative methods they are accustomed to. There has become an urgent need to prepare qualified leaders to lead these institutions, especially educational and academic institutions. According to educational leaders, there is a real crisis in leadership because of the urgent demand

for effective leaders and the need for preparation and professional development for those who occupy leadership positions in the coming decades (Zepeda & Ponticell, 2019).

The problem facing this study is that there has been little research done on a better understanding of how leadership should be taught and learned, what leaders need to know, the challenges they face, and how professional leadership development impacts leadership practices. These are all gaps that the researchers seek to shed light on.

1.3 The importance of the study

The significance of the current study is that it contributes to the gaining of knowledge in the field of leadership and the preparation of effective educational and academic leaders who are able to lead institutions effectively. This is expected to be reflected in the satisfaction of administrators, academics and students. Leadership is of great importance in the school administration, which makes a relentless effort to achieve the goals of the educational organization in various different fields. It has become crucial in the life of educational organizations, not only in terms of its role in implementing and achieving goals, but also in terms of its function in choosing aims and improving them, in assembling the loyalty of the school community around them, and in achieving hopes and aspirations. Accordingly, educational institutions in developed countries have contributed to the selection and preparation of leaders (Morsi, 2001).

1.4 The limits of the study

The study consists of the following limits:

Objective limit: The subject of the study was limited to the study of leadership in Palestine, perceptions, challenges, and a view of the future.

Spatial limitation: The study was limited to Palestine.

Human Limit: This study deals with the perceptions of faculty members, administrators, and doctoral students in various educational institutions in Palestine.

Time limit: This study was conducted in the year 2021.

2. Theoretical framework and previous studies

2.1 Leadership

Leadership is an art and talent that some individuals who are able to influence others have. It is more efficient if it is refined with knowledge that enhances the leader's success in building human and social relationships, and helps the group achieve its desired goals. The successful educational leader in his/her institution is the one who can build healthy human relationships based on strengthening each individual's self-confidence and respect for the feelings of others in word and deed. Successful leaders create an atmosphere of psychological reassurance stemming from their understanding of the capabilities, energies and circumstances of those working with them. Accordingly, this motivates them to perform educational work as a family that seeks with all strength, activity and energy to achieve the desired goals in an atmosphere of cooperation, harmony and understanding (Kanaan, 2009; Al-Otaibi et al., 2007; Gini & Green, 2013).

In his book *Leading Minds*, Gardner defines a leader as one or more individuals who significantly influence the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of a large number of individuals. He points out that leadership is the product of leaders (Gardner & Laskin, 2011). Although there is no specific definition of what leadership is (Channing, 2020), and despite the great and varying difference between researchers to define it, there is agreement on the character of influence in leadership. Tawfiq (2017) defines leadership and describes it as the process of influencing the group in order to direct efforts to achieve goals in line with his philosophy. The leader generates detailed directions about work and follows up on its implementation. As for Al-Tayyib (1995), he illustrates leadership as the process of influencing subordinates to direct their efforts in order to achieve the desired goals. The method of influence differs greatly from one official to another depending on his/her leadership philosophy and the extent of his/her desire to delegate authority. Learning is a broad concept that expresses the main process of human adaptation; hence it should not be restricted to classrooms and schools. Man is a permanent learner by nature, as described by the constructivist theory (Zaytoun, 2002). Learning leadership is like learning many knowledge, skills and abilities; Lewin (1951) explained it as a cyclical cycle of observation, reflection, testing of concepts and theories, as well as constant experimentation.

2.2 Can leadership be learned and taught?

The results of many studies indicate that leadership originates from the innate personality traits of leaders and the advanced skills that they can get from their environment and learn through training and practice (Al Qamsh, 2020; Elmuti et al, 2005; Rosenbach, 2003; Zhihong et al, 2013; Channing, 2020.)

Many studies that discussed leadership as an innate trait that is born with individuals and grows with them were guided by *the theory of traits* or what is known as *the theory of the great man of leadership* (Al-Sabra, 2016; Al-Qash, 2020; Corey, 2016). The English scientist Francis Galton (Abu Al-Nur and Muhammad, 2015) and the scientist Frederick Adams (Muhammad, 2009) - who are among the pioneers of this theory - argue that leaders are born but not made. According to the theory, there are personality traits that leadership calls for such as influence, persuasion, charisma, wisdom and potential leaders, a high degree of intuition, courage, Intelligence, practical guidance, and other skills that a great individual influences and leads members of his group with. They are of a nature that cannot be taught or learned in the formal sense according to the theory.

On the other hand, some studies negotiated the idea of leaders being made by situations and circumstances. Among the theories that dealt with this type of leadership is the contingency theory. Those who support the contingency theory claim that the emergence of any type of leaders depends on the environment in which the leader works. Unlike those who support the opinion which suggests that leadership traits or behaviors apply to any situation, according to this view, the leader who is most adaptive in situations is the most effective in leadership. (Bani Jaber, 2014; Gorton & Alston, 2006; Manfred&Kets;2015).

As for recent research, it focused on the possibility of acquiring the ability to lead by teaching knowledge, techniques and skills as well as raising the confidence of individuals. Leaders trained in leadership and made to be leaders (Chatman & Goncalo, 2015; Mole, 2014). In it, leadership qualities are transferred from leaders to their followers. In other words, some individuals influence situations more than others, through interactive relationships such as personal ones between leaders and their followers. Accordingly, a leader must possess certain personal skills in order to inspire followers to set their goals aside and pursue a common vision. This type of leader is believed to have the capability to change their circumstances through increased tenacity and commitment of followers and, at times, an alteration towards the entire organization.

Guthrie & Jones (2012) improved a theoretical framework for learning leadership through experience and asserted that face-to-face experience is the best way of learning especially when students learn from specific experiences and from different people. Participants in this study described theoretical frameworks for experiential and social learning in leadership practice in theory and practice and viewed efficient leadership learning as a comprehensive process. It is often developed through experiences, reflection, mentorship, and formal leadership education.

Germain et al. (2014) asks what if everyone already had the potential to be a competent leader. It answers this question as follows: that leadership will lose its character and begin to appear like many other human activities: such as playing, thinking and exercising. True leadership, according to German and his colleagues, requires “deeper intelligence.” Actions and decisions flow naturally, without much effort. When an individual realizes that something needs to be done, he or she simply does it.

Childress (2017) goes in a different direction in a study titled "Leadership Can't Be Taught, but It Can Be Learned!" He believes that an individual cannot be a leader with information. Listening to leadership lectures, or even reading books about leadership does not develop leadership skills. It provides useful information about leadership but not skills. Those who have the commitment and drive to lead learn by doing; through experience, not through theory. Where they watch other leaders, face difficult situations and absorb those lessons, they succeed once and fail times, and thus build the leadership character.

2.3 Challenges Facing Leadership

Wart (2013) discussed in an analytical study "Lessons From leadership theory and contemporary challenges of leaders" the challenges facing leadership. These challenges change and develop dramatically over time, which requires leaders to find ways to deal with them, whether these challenges are inside or outside Enterprise. Leaders will eventually realize that the leadership skills they used in a particular situation must change when they encounter new problems in light of the changes surrounding them.

Al-Badri (2001) mentioned these challenges as follows:

-The political challenge: represented by the current global and regional events and developments, which affect development and growth. Educational systems are responsible for facing these challenges.

-Economic Challenge: Any economic development is always accompanied by a rapid movement of capital and information, which creates a great challenge that must be faced with leadership wisdom in order to increase trade rates and expand production.

-Socio-cultural challenge: which is evident when the growth rates increase in the areas of development, which results in it; An imbalance that leads to a decline in empathy, social integration, weak family bonding, and others.

-The scientific, technical and media challenge: one of the most prominent developments in this stage is the astonishing acceleration of the scientific revolution and information technology and its applications. This led to the collapse of the concept of stability, and the only constant at this stage is the continuous change in the scientific and technological field, and the consequences and challenges that follow.

The challenge of knowledge production: developed countries spend huge amounts of their budget on research and development, the production of knowledge and the creativity and innovation that accompanies it. It is a great challenge, whether at the level of countries or at the level of institutions.

-Efficiency of internal and external education: which is related to raising the effectiveness of educational institutions. It will be accomplished through awareness of the needs of development and the labor market, and the development of a comprehensive plan for all sectors of society in order to expand education in terms of quantity and quality.

Centralization in decision-making: the fact that power is in the hands of a limited group of individuals, this has negative repercussions on the efficiency and effectiveness of educational institutions. Therefore, it is a challenge to the ability of these institutions to achieve their goals and carry out their responsibilities.

2.4 Leadership Professional Development

In the context of professional development for leaders, Al Qubaisi (2014) defines professional development as: “The process by which an individual’s considerations and desires for career advancement are aligned with the organization’s future needs and opportunities for growth.” Many studies have found that there are differences between leaders which increase and appear in new leaders. New managers take over their job armed with various knowledge and experiences that may be limited. This shows the actual need for training and gaining thoughtful development in order to improve leaders in the best way in all aspects, whether the aspect was cognitive, or strategies for dealing with situations, and training in making the most appropriate decision based on scientific methodologies (Al-Atiq, 2016; Al-Mismari, 2017; Al-Sabai, 2015; Drury, 2018“).

2.5 Conceptual framework

The current study is based on theories of 'cognitive development' through formal and informal learning experiences. The results of this study and others show that leadership is either innate, or skills that a leader can acquire from his/her environment or learn through training and practice (Channing, 2020; Rosenbach, 2003; Elmuti et al, 2005; Zhihong et al, 2013). Connaughton, et al., 2003). Zhihong et al. (2013) suggest that some leadership skills may not be teachable, such as building relationships between employees and demonstrating mutual trust. Moreover, Elmuti et al. (2005) argue that leadership is a holistic, integrated approach that demands interpersonal and practical skills.

Channing (2020) argues that leadership can largely be taught through formal education, or through leadership development programs. Aspiring leaders have reported that they learned leadership by interacting with live scenes of effective leaders, leaving out ineffective leaders' behaviors. Leadership courses provide students with an opportunity to test leadership theories, through discussions, case studies, and videos students can watch that embody leadership, as well as projects that require students to apply theoretical and practical leadership concepts (Billsberry, 2009.)

Learning leadership, like any learning of various skills or abilities, is characterized by stability through the acquisition of formal and informal educational expertises. Lewin (1951) considers learning to be a cyclical feedback loop through observation, testing of theoretical concepts, and concrete experiences. Dewey's (1938) portrays the process of learning as observation, experience, judgment and action. Guthrie & Jones (2012) have developed a theoretical framework for learning

leadership by experience. They view "concrete experience as 'learning by encounter'", which can be achieved through specific experiences, relating to different people.

Guidance, in the form of assistance and modeling from a more capable peer, can help an aspiring leader develop leadership competencies and problem-solving abilities through collaboration. Vygotsky's (1978) suggests in this context that people learn to develop their thinking with the help of a more competent or skilled person. Additionally, learning theory suggests Social Bandura (1977) for people to identify with others they view as role models, and to imitate the behaviors they have observed.

3. Previous studies

Previous studies were discussed within three aspects:

3.1 The first aspect: studies dealing with the issue of leadership.

Leonard & Maulding (2019) in a study whose purpose was to investigate the relationship between skill set and principals' ratings across their government rating systems, emphasized the growing interest in training in recent years. This is because leadership training for school principals has become equated with knowledge, learning a set of skills, or challenging competencies, and an internship that may or may not include activities that reflect the overall position of the principal. The study classified some skills as "Leadership Intelligence" LSI skills. The results indicated that there are statistically significant variations regarding the differences between aspiring administrators and practitioners in LSI. This shows that over time, growth in the skill set can be achieved.

In a study by Al-Ghamdi (2020), the descriptive approach was used to identify the role of educational leadership in the blended learning environment and the requirements for activating that role. The study was applied to (132) educational supervisors. The results were as follows: The degree of approval of the sample members on the role of educational leadership came to a neutral degree, with a mean of (3.23). The study recommended the dissemination of culture in the educational field on the importance of the role of educational leadership in the blended learning environment. This can be done through training programs, meetings and educational concerns, in order to clarify the role of educational leadership in explaining the nature of blended education.

3.2 The second aspect: studies dealing with the challenges facing leadership.

One of the studies that discussed the challenges facing leaders was a study by the researchers Alma & Jones (2021) entitled: "Exploring the leadership knowledge base: evidence, implications, and challenges for educational leadership in Wales". It aimed to present evidence, implications, and challenges related to leadership preparation, leadership development, and leadership learning. It will be achieved by elaborating on empirical evidence to address three crucial questions for school and system improvement. The study relied on the knowledge base of educational leadership in order to explore the most significant concepts, questions and central issues related to contemporary politics in Wales.

In a study by Al-Ali (2015), titled: "The Challenges Facing Academic and Administrative Leaders in Emerging Universities in the Kingdom by Application to the University of Tabuk." The study tool was applied to a sample of (72) leaders, including deans of faculties, deans of support deans, heads of departments and other leaders of Tabuk University. The study discovered many obstacles facing leadership. The most important of which are: the weakness of the incentive system, the presence of centralization in decision-making, the shortage of training opportunities for faculty members and the lack of confidence in the information currently available to make the right decision. The study recommended the need to support colleges and deanships with qualified and trained cadres on the nature of work. Moreover, it suggested establishing a training unit for academic leaders, and involving them in the decision-making process at the university.

3.3 The third aspect: training and professional development of the leader.

Educational research and studies concentrated on training and professional development for leaders. Al-Toukhi et al. (2016) showed in their study the reality of the professional development of educational leaders in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its relationship to job satisfaction from their point of view. The study targeted (69) educational leaders represented by directors of education departments and their assistants, general counselors, directors of coordination departments and principals of schools in the Qassim region in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The researchers used a three-part questionnaire: The first part contains basic information about the study sample. The second part was divided into two sections: the first section was the training needs of educational leaders, whereas the second one was the methods of professional development for educational leaders. The third part studies job satisfaction for educational leaders.

The study reached a set of results, the most important of which are: The most significant training need for leadership is developing plans to achieve quality in educational administration that are compatible with global trends in administrative work. Furthermore, the most professional development method for educational leaders is the enrollment in training, qualification programs and courses held by the educational administration as well as the ministry in the field of professional development.

There is a study by Stoltzfus (2010) entitled: "The relationship between teachers' training transfer and their receptions of principal leadership style", this study aimed at identifying leadership styles and managerial behaviors that affect the transfer of training to the classroom. The study showed that there is a relationship between leadership styles and training transfer. Additionally, it indicated the most important leadership practices that helped spread the training. According to the study, transfer and transfer managers were the most influential in transferring training.

On the Palestinian side, researcher Zaher conducted a study in 2019 that questioned the reality of the professional development strategies for new principals applied in Jerusalem schools in terms of the needs and challenges facing their professional development. What are the advantages of the global EPIC model in the professional development process of new managers by accompanying them to develop effectiveness, learning by doing, motivation and community participation? The results were positive and to a high degree indicating that the Ministry of Education relies on courses Training that precedes appointment and employment, and depends on professional development strategies. On the other hand, the new managers make a personal effort in order to obtain an efficient performance and self-development, as a result of the failing on the part of the Ministry of Education in providing great motivation.

4. Study Methodology

This study adopts the qualitative research method, within the framework of multiple case studies (Yin, 2003). It aims to reveal and understand the perceptions of faculty members, administrators, and doctoral students in different educational institutions in Palestine about learning and teaching leadership. This method was chosen for its relevance to the topic of the research in terms of the sample selection mechanism. At the same time, this approach allows the respondents to list their impressions of learning and teaching leadership (Vannoni, 2014).

4.1 Study participants

Three groups participated in the study. The first group includes two lecturers from two universities. One of them teaches at An-Najah National University, while the other one teaches at the Arab American University; their names are Mahmoud and Fares (pseudonyms). As for the second group, it includes administrative staff in Palestinian institutions. One of them is an administrator at the National Institute for Educational Training, and the other one is an administrator in one of the Education Directorates in the Educational Planning Department; their names are Sahar and Karam (two pseudonyms). The third group includes PhD students: two of them studies at An-Najah University, and a PhD student studies at the Arab American University. All of whom have completed courses in educational leadership: Marwa, Jawad, and Shaza (pseudonyms).

4.2 Data collection and analysis

As for the data collection tools, they will be as follows: Data were collected through semi-structured interviews simultaneously via the Zoom platform. This technology allows the interview to be recorded automatically. In order for the researchers after each interview to smoothly transcribe the data, each interview ranged from 30 to 40 minutes. It contained open questions directed to faculty members, administrators, and students in order to obtain the qualitative data necessary to answer the study questions related to the perceptions of faculty, administrators, and university students in Palestine about learning and teaching leadership (Hamidchieh, 2012).

After reviewing the educational literature connected with interview procedures and types and referring to the objectives of these interviews and study questions, interview questions were

modified. The questions were initially written and presented to the specialists with experience. This was done to make observations and suggestions about the wording and linguistic accuracy, and the extent to which the questions are related to the subject of the study questions, as well as the objectives of the interview (Hamidchieh, 2012).

A unified interview was formulated for the faculty, staff and doctoral students. Questions were formulated that are appropriate for the three parties regardless of the positions they occupy, or because part of the participants are PhD students (Hamidchia, 2012). They were formulated in five aspects: In the first aspect, three central questions were defined: the necessity of preparing leaders, the importance of leadership knowledge, and the participants' perceptions of leadership teaching and learning. The second aspect, which included two central questions, focused on the challenges of teaching and learning leadership. The third aspect contained two central questions, one of which focused on the possibility of teaching leadership, and the other on the required leadership competencies. The fourth aspect included two questions that shed light on the need for professional development in the field of leadership, and the areas that need to be improved. The last aspect, which contained one question, focused on leadership practices on the ground.

4.3 Data analysis method

The qualitative analysis of the data collected from the interviews was carried out based on thematic analysis according to a process by Brown and Clarke (Barun & Clarke, 2006):

- Analyzing the content by reading the interviews several times to get an initial perception of the information and ideas they include, developing a list of responses, and reading again to re-categorize the responses into groups and summarize the classifications reached.
- The content (words/phrases/sentences) is coded by writing a word or phrase denoting it in order to answer the research questions (vertical reading).

Similar answers are grouped into appropriate categories.

- The categories and their suitability for the interview aspects were reviewed (through finding logical relationships between symbols). They fall under five aspects: participants' perceptions about the necessity of preparing leaders as well as leadership knowledge and teaching it, the challenges facing teaching and learning leadership, the extent to which leadership is taught, and

the urgent need for professional development of leadership. At last, they show how leadership teaching is manifested in leaders' practices.

-Writing the results according to the determined aspects.

5. Study results and discussion

The results are presented in the framework of five main aspects. Through these aspects, participants express their perceptions about the necessity of preparing leaders in addition to leadership knowledge and teaching. They list the challenges facing leadership teaching and learning, the extent to which leadership can be taught, the urgent need for leadership professional development, and how leadership education is manifested in leaders' practices.

5.1 Participants' perceptions about the necessity of preparing and teaching leaders and leadership knowledge

The results of the interviews showed that there was an agreement among the participants on the necessity of preparing leaders to take over the leadership of institutions, especially educational ones, and to take them towards change. The lecturer Mahmoud (pseudonym) says: "Yes, there is an urgent need to prepare leaders, even at the level of kindergartens, which need to be taught." Children should be taught leadership. This is a teaching sequence from the first educational stage to the academic stage (university stage). He proceeds to explain the importance of leadership: "Because we need innovative people, who rely on themselves to make decisions in solving problems, we need initiatives; because of the characteristics of leadership. Leaders are proactive and do not wait for them to be available, send or provide ready information until they solve the problem..."

The administrator Karam (a pseudonym) focuses on the necessity of the leader's presence in institutions and its importance in leading institutions in light of changes, developments, challenges and crises. He argues: "Certainly, preparing educational leaders is a very important matter. Moreover, preparing leaders in the right manner reflects positively at all levels on the institution they lead, on its employees and their positions as well as the nature of their jobs.

PhD student Shaza (pseudonym) shed light on the importance of preparing leaders to lead various institutions qualitatively. She says: “Yes, it is definitely necessary to prepare leaders, build capabilities and qualify future leaders for the public sector. This is achieved through modern and distinguished training programs as well as training methods based on an interactive approach and enhance Leadership and administrative skills of trainees.” However, PhD student Jawad (pseudonym) agrees with others that leaders must be prepared, but not systematic. He suggests: “I see a need to enhance the leadership morals of individuals in their daily lives and not to prepare leaders in the literal sense that has been misused by some people. It was exploited in courses that have no meaning except for material gain only.” Studies (Bani Jaber, 2014; Manfred & Kets, 2015; Gorton & Alston, 2006) indicated to Jawad (a pseudonym) that attitudes are what refine the leader. Nevertheless, he does not deny that preparing the leader needs leadership knowledge, but away from the formal and informal frameworks that teach leadership in theory and practice. He moreover did not indicate that it is innate.

When the participants were asked about the significance of leadership knowledge and its impact on crystallizing the leadership personality in the future, and its skillful ability to face problems, manage conflicts and others, they agreed on the importance of leadership knowledge. The lecturer, Fares (a pseudonym), stated: “Without a doubt, there is a need for them to play their leadership role.” As for the administrator, Huda (a pseudonym), she clarified the importance of leadership knowledge and the various fields of knowledge it includes. She argued: “Yes, it is true, the leader in our time needs special knowledge. Leaders are supposed to master leadership through identifying leadership's needs such as planning and communication with others as well as any knowledge that guarantees the success of the leader.

Marwa (pseudonym), a doctoral student, stressed the importance of leadership knowledge due to its role in crystallizing the leadership personality. She says: "Leadership knowledge is necessary to enable leaders perform their tasks efficiently, play their leadership role effectively, and achieve their goals at a minimal cost and the fastest time." Several studies have confirmed that leadership is primarily acquired knowledge (Swan, 2018; Boerma et al., 2017; Gurdjian & Halbeisen, 2014). Furthermore, its acquisition is systematic and not random, and this requires the presence of specializations in universities or the establishment of official training centers or Informal. This systematically prepare leaders from the early stages of life all the way to the university level and beyond. The problem is that if there are no sponsors for this sustainable preparation, the future of

society will be at stake. This is what the lecturer Mahmoud (a pseudonym) declared: "And it will remain dependent on traditional organizational structures, and therefore we will not find an atmosphere that provides creativity, innovations and initiatives." The administrator Karam (a pseudonym) stressed that the lack of leadership knowledge has negative consequences: "The lack of leadership knowledge of leaders will be a problematic factor that clearly reduces the performance of their leadership tasks." Based on the findings of the Channing study (2020), mentorship and real-world experiences play important roles in the development of leadership epistemology. Without the presence of a so-called cognitive mediator, it will not be systematically refining the leadership personality based on the considered theories and the experiences of leaders who have been refined with these epistemological theories. Accordingly, the lecturer Mahmoud (a pseudonym) sums up the importance of acquiring knowledge in the leadership field: "Leadership by visualizing a learned behavior that can be learned. Certainly, this learning requires knowledge, skills, theories, and then it needs practice, exercise and so on; this association qualifies leaders."

As for teaching leadership in Palestine, the participants' perceptions of it conflicted. Jawad (a pseudonym) does not agree that teaching is the way through which leaders are prepared. He argues: "I am against the phrase teaching leadership. Leadership is not taught, but rather it is an experience that can be transferred to others through a live model." While the administrator, Huda (a pseudonym), believes that teaching leadership is nothing more than theoretical. She explains: "teaching leadership is mostly based on the theoretical side without practical application. For example, newly hired school principals take courses for a full year on leadership with a system of courses and lectures and they have to apply for themselves in school." The administrator, Karam (a pseudonym), believes that leadership is still in its early stages. He says: "I believe that teaching and learning leadership in Palestine is still in its first steps. Although there are some steps, programs as well as courses on preparing leaders, they are still considered recent procedures. For example, there is a diploma for school leadership supervised by the Ministry of Education targeting school principals. Moreover, with regard to higher education, there are some programs that include courses that deal with the subject of leadership, such as the educational administration program that includes courses on the subject of leadership." But the lecturer Fares (a pseudonym) has a completely different opinion, as he does not seem to be certain of the existence of institutions that teach leadership at all. He explains "I do not know an institution that works specifically in Palestine to prepare leaders." As for the doctoral student Shaza (pseudonym), she believes that teaching

leadership in Palestine is up to the standard. She says: “Teaching leadership in Palestine is very good, as more projects are done, tasks are equitably distributed to others, and leaders are the source of energy, strength and a source of aspiration for workers.” Lecturer Mahmoud (pseudonym) showed that Palestine had a qualitative experience on teaching leadership. He explains: “They established the National School of Leadership which assigned competencies in the ministerial framework, meaning one or two people were chosen from each ministry. They were exposed to a set of courses so that at the end of teaching they obtain a (leadership diploma). These courses were on problem solving, leadership systems and scientific research. The presence of competencies from abroad also helped them greatly, which also contributed to the training of these selected leaders. This may be a formal attempt or a framed attempt to produce leaders...if you will: it is a process of shifting from management to leadership.” What the participants mentioned is compatible with studies (Al-Toukhi et al., 2016; Zaher, 2019; Stoltzfus, 2010) which show the importance of teaching, training and preparing leaders in Palestine. They suggest that It is one of the means of governmental and non-governmental institutions to develop their human cadres, and improve their abilities and skills. People grow up to be leaders. However, according to the participants in the study, it is noted that there is a gap in the preparation of leaders, which lies in the fact that leadership is for specific people. Conditions are created for them, who are raised under the eyes of the historical leadership generation so that this leadership continues. On the other hand, there are young people who did not find their way to learn leadership. In the presence of formal or informal attempts to teach leadership, this is what the lecturer Mahmoud (a pseudonym) stated: “When two generations arise with two different and sometimes contradictory views, it becomes more like a state of conflict than a state of development and agreement.”

5.2 Challenges that face teaching and learning leadership

After extrapolating the challenges facing leadership teaching as stated by the participants in the study, several challenges were spotted. They are manifested in the corruption that kills everything related to the topic of leadership, the absence of an agreed-upon curriculum or scientific material, the lack of a clear vision in teaching leadership, as well as the lack of consensus in Teaching leadership. This is due to the presence of groups which causes incompatibility, lack of qualification to prepare leaders, lack of independence of the institution that studies leadership due to the presence of political or partisan influences and lack of specialists and competencies to teach

leadership. References approved in teaching and training leadership are old and far from renewal and modernization. Additionally, there is lack of use of modern management methods in the field of leadership. The financial cost is problematic, for there is not enough budget. Finally, trainers still focus on the traditional methodology.

According to the participants in the study, the following challenges are the ones facing leadership learning. First, there is not an influential live leadership model that teaches effective leadership. Another obstacle is the association of the concept of leadership with positions, and its monopoly by a specific group of influential people. Moreover, participants recognize a lack of a clear vision, an absence of educational competencies capable of teaching leadership to learners, an absence of private academic institutions in learning leadership, as well as the lack of Arabic references on the subject of learning leadership. There is not an update for ready-made and prepared training materials. At last, the necessary adjustments to suit the needs, levels, knowledge and experiences of learners are not made. Studies have pointed to some of these challenges (Al-Badri, 2001; Al-Ali, 2015; Alma & Jones, 2021; Warts, 2013).

The researchers believe that these two types of challenges are an indication of the reasons that made attempts to teach and learn leadership difficult, such as trying to establish a national school for teaching leadership, especially if the discussion is about teaching leadership in the formal sense. All these challenges make teaching and learning leadership theoretically and practically missing. The academic system lacks qualified people, incubating academic institutions and other factors in order to teach leadership as a science. It qualifies students to obtain a certificate in the specialty of leadership and most importantly, practice leadership on the ground, in light of the absence of decentralization in the leadership of institutions. The lecturer, Mahmoud (pseudonym), believes that facing these different challenges: "Define a vision and message for leadership, establish institutions that are interested in leadership education and in which the graduate will be called (leader). This is simply how we face challenges."

5.3 Leadership education possibility:

The study participants agree that it is possible to teach leadership. Each participant presents their conditions for achieving this possibility:

Marwa, a PhD student (a pseudonym), argues: “But someone who will study leadership must be prepared before he/she does so, and the teacher must be an inspiring and influential person.” Jawad, a PhD student (a pseudonym) explains: “Leaders need a fertile environment of living models such as freedom of opinion, transparent work environments, urgent career development standards, and avoidance of nepotism.” The lecturer, Faris (a pseudonym), says: “It is possible if there is an intention among the officials, with a guarantee of financing for this purpose.” However, it is noted that Huda had a condition that differed from the rest of the participants. She argues: “One of the theories of leadership is the great man, which considers the leader to be borne by nature, and other theories that talk about the possibility of training and developing some skills for the leader. Therefore, the two ideas must be combined, beginning with choosing the person with leadership qualities, and then developing and qualifying them by placing them on positions that require skill in behavior and in making wise decisions. The current study is based on theories of knowledge development. It explains that leadership is a science and an art at the same time. Additionally, science needs knowledge that is acquired to internalize and then practice on the ground (Channing, 2020; Rosenbach, 2003; Elmuti et al, 2005; Zhihong et al, 2013; Connaughton Lawrence, Rubin &, 2003; Mole, 2014). Unlike those who claim that leadership is innate, Zhihong et al. (2013) suggests that there are some skills such as building mutual trust between employees and close relationships that may not be acquired with education.

The study participants believe that leadership education contributes to providing learners with many various skills and knowledge that are of great importance when practicing leadership in the real world. Examples of such skills are self-management, the ability to act strategically, effective communication, reliable officials, a clear vision of the future, and a speed of learning. The lecturer, Fares (a pseudonym), adds: “Leadership education provides the learner with a future vision and the ability to plan and implement.” As for Karam (a pseudonym), he suggested a set of knowledge and skills that leadership education helps imparting to the learner. He says: “relationship building, problem solving, independence, Vision and creativity, self-motivation, self-confidence, commitment, flexibility and susceptibility to change. Mahmoud (a pseudonym) elaborated on

mentioning and explaining the outcomes provided by leadership education. He adds “The ability to innovate and solve problems, especially in times of crisis, enjoy high flexibility, be distinguished by practical research so that leaders' decisions are objective and methodical. They should be well-educated and informed, and they have high communication skills.” Marwa (a pseudonym) added other competencies that leadership learners acquire: “the ability to plan, emotional and social intelligence, communication skills through various media, language and verbal abilities, the ability to manage financial and human resources and the ability to work within a team.”

These capabilities that can be acquired through leadership education clearly indicate that a leading figure, with these competencies mentioned and others, has the abilities to manage an institution towards change. Potential leaders have the characteristics that enable them to influence followers, manage conflicts and solve problems by virtue of their high levels of thinking (Channing, 2020). It is also observed that participants' responses, concerning the context of the possibility of learning leadership and the knowledge that can be gained from it, aligned with Lewin's (1951) and Dewey's (1938) theories of cognitive development. They place the learner within the framework of observation and testing of concrete concepts and experiences.

5.4 The need for professional development and leadership training, and areas for professional development

The results of the interviews in the framework of professional leadership development showed that participants agreed that there is an urgent need for professional development and leadership training. They agree that this helps learners internalize leadership theories in a practical way. The administrator Karam (a pseudonym) explains: “There is an urgent and necessary need for professional development for leadership through programs, activities, means and practices. They are developed to help educational leaders raise the level of their competencies to acquire the expertise and skills necessary to raise their professional level and improve their performance. The importance of professional development for educational leadership lies in adding new knowledge, developing a plan to enhance the strengths and overcome the weaknesses of educational leaders, in addition to keeping pace with the developments of the times in the scientific and educational fields.” The lecturer Mahmoud (pseudonym) believes that if leaders do not respond to the need for development and training, they must withdraw from their position: “I think that any job within two

years of its occupancy, if leaders are unable to develop themselves, I think that they must withdraw from the position.

As for the areas of professional development mentioned by some of the study participants, Shaza (a pseudonym) suggests in this context: “Professional development includes providing appropriate support to create a strong team in the workplace and being keen on implementing projects, initiatives and various other works to the fullest. Effective leaders are those who possess leadership skills, contribute to raising employees' productivity and loyalty to the company, positive support, and contribute to overcoming obstacles in cooperation with the work team.” On the other hand, Huda believes that there are many areas that a leader must develop. She explains: “leaders must develop their communication skills, abilities to estimate the capabilities of employees to assign them accordingly, the abilities to balance matters and make wise, thoughtful decisions without haste, emotional balance, and the distribution of roles.”

Participants reacted in ways consistent with social learning theories and experiential learning theories such as Bandura's (1977) and Guthrie & Jones (2012). Participants suggest that leadership learning occurs by working closely with others, gaining meaningful work experiences, and then providing opportunities to apply their learning to their own leadership practices.

5.5 How does leadership education manifest itself in practical leadership practices?

The participants gave different answers about how leadership education appears in practical practices. This stems from the knowledge gap that was mentioned about the academic institutional emptiness that should take into account the education of leaders. Marwa (a pseudonym) believes that leadership education does not rise to the level of practical practice, describing it as weak. She explains: “Leadership education is weak because leadership models in general are far from the hoped-for level. This appears through the outputs and outcomes of the institutions they lead.” While the lecturer Mahmoud shed light on the reality of the practice of leadership in Palestinian institutions. He says: “I start with the phrase “close but open!” You are a leader but you have to abide by the instructions. This is what happens in the field of leadership. We authorize the authorities, but we authorize the names, and we keep the powers.” Karam (a pseudonym) views the necessity of professional development for leadership and training: “In my opinion, leadership education is linked to the professional development of educational leadership. It is the mainstay

through which they can acquire many competencies necessary to achieve their expected roles. Hence, leadership education needs training based on recognizing the needs of these leaders based on an analysis of strengths and weaknesses.” Sahar agrees with Karam (pseudonyms), but the lecturer, Fares (a pseudonym) seems to be unfamiliar with leadership education in Palestine. He states: "I am not particularly aware of leadership education in Palestine."

The results of what the participants narrated showed the impact of leadership education on leaders' practices in reality. They indicated that this is consistent with all theories of cognitive development that emphasize the importance of leaders practicing what they learn of theories, skills and competencies in leadership.

(Lewin, 1951; Dewey's, 1938; Jones & Guthrie, 2012; Vygotsky's, 1978; Bandura, 1977) But the reality, as stated by some participants, is that there is a gap between theory and practice of leadership. Mahmoud (pseudonym) says on that: "At the moment, you are an educational leader as you learned in the course, that you will do such and such. Or these are leadership theories and so on. But listen! We kindly ask you to follow the instructions according to such and such. When any problem occurs, you should inform the Directorate of Education. If you want to leave, you must inform the concerned authorities. Then, you are a leader in name, and a manager in reality.

6. Recommendations:

After reviewing the study, the researchers recommend the following:

- Setting particular principals and criteria for choosing educational leaders and administrators in educational institutions. Leadership qualities, and scientific and administrative competencies should be taken into consideration.
- The requirement of creating efficient training programs for administrative leaders in educational institutions and university education institutions, based on the capabilities and specifications of a successful administrative leader.
- Apply leadership styles and methods to corporate managers before their appointment and work to achieve their professional growth before and during their work.
- Develop a strategic plan to meet the challenges facing the educational leadership in all fields.

- Developing the school leadership program that targets school principals. It is supervised by the Ministry of Education, to be a mandatory program for all school principals to join, and to keep pace with contemporary developments and trends in the subject of leadership constantly.
- Holding specialized courses for educational leaders in the Ministries of Education and Higher Education. This raises their awareness of the importance of professional development and its goals in the educational process.

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