

# Successful Leadership Practices in School Problem-Solving by the Principals of the Secondary Schools in Irbid Educational Area

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## Abstract

This study aimed at identifying the successful leadership practices for solving school problems by the principals of the secondary schools in Irbid educational area. It also aimed at identifying the differences in the principals' evaluations of these practices by the variables of gender, academic degree, and work experience. The sample consisted of (473) male and female principals. They completed a 40-item questionnaire developed for the purposes of this study. The questionnaire contained four domains: successful leadership practices for teachers' problem-solving; students; local community and parents; and school environment and supplies. The results of the study showed that successful leadership practices for school problem-solving were high, except for the local community and parents' problem-solving domain, which was at medium degree. The results further showed statistically significant differences among the principals' responses to the successful leadership practices attributed to the gender, academic degree and work experiences variables. The study recommended focusing on achieving the partnership principle between the school and the local community, and activation of the principal's role as an educational leader at school.

**Keywords:** practices, successful leadership, school problem-solving, Irbid, Jordan

## 1. Introduction

The school is the mirror that reflects the success or failure of the educational systems, being the executive level of the educational plans and policies. The success of the school in achieving its purposes is a true reflection of the successful leadership practices in the school. Thomas (2001) maintained that the safe school leadership of the future school should be prepared for carrying out its leadership role efficiently and effectively. This may be realized by the development of the educational environment, building good relationships outside and inside the school, and designing short-term programs to acquire developed skills in order to promote his/her leading works. Helen (1997) added stimulation of the administrative and educational faculties and students to work effectively and efficiently according to the contemporary educational criteria. Richard and Elena (1995) emphasized on setting conduct-defining systems, that will be applied by cooperation with the school leadership and parents for students' problem-solving (as quoted from "The Honor Level System", designed by Church Ward in 1995 in the United States of America).

Thus, the school leadership is an interactive, social process between the school leadership, the teachers, the students and the local community. All these parties are engaged in solving the school problems, (Specialized National Councils; 2003). Southworth (2004) said that the effective leadership is influential based on three strategies: pattern setting, monitoring or controlling, and dialogue.

In the light of the above, we may refer to the successful leadership as the one that puts these strategies as an essential foundation in school problem-solving in a participatory mode between the school leader and the stakeholders of the educational process. Yukl (2002) indicated that the school leadership is a social influence process, and the leader is the influential who depends on all the participants to achieve the teaching quality and to study its problems. As a result, the leadership is open to many problems that require successful initiatives for solving such problems (Bush, 2008).

Al-Ajez (2001) indicated that among school leadership problems are those concerning the teachers and poor supplies that would serve the teaching environment. This also found a strong support in the study conducted by

Abu Oudeh (2004) and Due-Kworth (2000) who added the school security and student violence. Consequently, the solutions emerging from the participatory leadership principle hold positive results. This is built on the fact that the leader's conduct at school (as referred to by Blasé and Blasé, 1998), is based on three aspects: dialogue with teachers, holding conferences, and reinforcing the teachers' professional growth; in order to achieve the power of participation and sound initiations, and enhancing teachers' thinking. All these factors raise the predictive ability of the school incidents, and setting the successful proposals by cooperation with the school leadership. Martin (2012) showed that the practices of the successful leadership in the schools is the application of the societal partnership principle, so that the school will be related to the different, governmental and private, community institutions; and will have close relations with the family and the surrounding community. He further called to follow the strategies employed by the United States of America in applying the educational reform policy through partnership between the school and the local community institutions, in order to solve the problems pertinent to the students, teachers and school environment (Zay, 1994, p. 45).

Based on the theoretical literature, the school represents a miniature, open, human society that is affected by and having a concrete effect on the surrounding community. A study conducted by Demsey and Walker (2002) showed that communication between the school and society has many benefits for students, teachers and school environment. On the other hand, the school is encountered by problems that can be overcome by the successful school leadership. Accordingly, the leadership practices of the school principal have a wide role in school problem-solving, especially if the participatory and cooperation methods with the surrounding parties (teachers, parents and local community) methods were put in force. In the light of the aforementioned findings, the problem of this study emerged to identify and define the successful leadership practices for school problem-solving.

The successful leadership practices for school problem-solving arise from the data of the transformational leadership model, which focused on the task of building and development of the abilities of the school workers at the school, the organizational commitment, formation of new leaders, and developing the organizational atmosphere (Brewster, 2005). The educational leadership theory added the transference of the institution from the current status to a better one, through providing a positive teaching atmosphere, time investing, enhancement of the professional development, clarity in work, providing incentives to the teachers and students, definition of the school trends, and redesigning the school (Leithwood, 2005). Boethel (2003) said that the successful leadership, in its practices, applies activation of the students' role in the school achievements and development, in addition to the family and community roles. Al-Da'our (2007) showed that the leadership practices of the school principal toward the teachers are high, followed by planning, evaluation, and then his/her practices toward the parents and local community, respectively.

There was an indirect interest in the studies conducted about the subject of the current study. The study of Balju (2008), underpinned the problems facing the female students at schools (health, familial, and professional), which are further supported by the role of the successful leadership to overcome these problems. Moreover, the study of Coyle and Witcher (2004) focused on transforming the ideas into practices that reinforce the school effectiveness with the community in the exchange of consultations for initiating the school development programs. Rex (2005), emphasized the role of the school principal in the development of the local community, directing the students for projects caring for the community problems, in addition to those of the school. Meanwhile, the study conducted by Knowles (2001), indicated that the principal has important leadership practices shown in the positive dealing method with the teachers and school workers, and problem-solving through the effective participatory manner. On the other hand, the study of Anderson (2000) underscored the poor cooperation between the local community and school, which ascertains the role of the principal as an effective educational leader, through his/her leadership practices. Peterson (2006) reassured the role of the principal as an educational leader in practical planning, teachers and workers' development, professionally, in order to deal with the school and community problems positively. Study of Elbert (1979) emphasized the leadership characteristics concerning the principal's ability to persuade the teachers for accepting his/her leadership steps, and identifying the type of behavior that provides the trust atmosphere among the workers, as well as the teachers' compliance to the school development decisions. The study of Calion (1982) focused on providing support to the teacher, improving the relationship between the principal and teachers, and creating an organizational, comfortable atmosphere that helps in problem-solving. Finally, the study of Medley and Homer (1987) showed the weakness of the principal in his/her judgment accuracy on the teachers' performance. In conclusion, all whatever indicated by the above mentioned studies can be viewed as an evidence of the role of the school leadership in solving the different school problems.

## 2. Objectives

The study aims to identify the successful leadership practices to solve the school problems, those relating to the teachers, students, local community, parents, school environment and supplies, through the study of a sample of

the school principals in Irbid Educational Area. Specifically, the study was designed to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the successful leadership practices for solving the school problems by the secondary school principals in Irbid Educational Area?
- 2) Are there differences among the responses of the study sample about the leadership practices for solving the school problems according to the variables of gender, academic degree, and work experience?

### 3. Significance of the Study

The significance of the study arises from the importance of the successful leadership practices for solving the school problems, through which the educational leaders (principals and supervisors) may view these practices as a way to solve the problems of their schools. In addition, the results of this study are taken as a reference for building the relevant creative programs for solving the problems of teachers, students, local community, parents, school environment and supplies. Finally, the results of the study will be presented to the school leaders as an idea of finding out the problem before its occurrence, as a leadership principle, without being surprised by problems that obstacle achieving the actual objectives in the school.

### 4. Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature and utilized the survey methodology.

#### 4.1 Population and Sample

The population of study consisted of all secondary school principals in Irbid Educational Area (N=713). A random sample consisting of (473) principals was selected. The sample represent (66%) of the study population. Table 1 illustrates the sample characteristics.

Table 1. Distribution of the study population and sample by their variables in Irbid educational area

Variables		Study Population	Study Sample	Percentage of the Total Population
		No.	No.	
Gender	Female	371	251	67%
	Male	342	222	65%
Academic Degree	BA	427	304	71%
	MA and More	286	169	59%
Work experience	Less than 10 Years	246	178	72%
	10 Years and More	467	295	63%
Total		713	473	66%

#### 4.2 Study Instrument

The study instrument was constructed for identifying the successful leadership practices of the school principals in solving the school problems. In constructing the survey, the researchers carried out the following:

- 1) Review of the theoretical literature pertaining to the study subject matter.
- 2) A reconnaissance study and interviewing the principals in order to define the school problems and ways for solving them by the principals.
- 3) Paraphrasing (53) items of the survey, distributed over four domains of successful leadership practices in solving the school problems.
- 4) The items were organized for responses based on Likert's five-point grading scale as follows: (very high, high, medium, low, and very low), which were given the following values: (5, 4, 3, 2 and 1), respectively. Evaluation degrees were as follows: (4.21-5): very high, (3.41-4.20): high, (2.61-3.40): medium, (1.81-2.60): low, and (1-1.80) very low.

##### 4.2.1 Validity of the Instrument

The instrument items were presented to a number of experienced reviewers professionally specialized in education and educational leadership. The researchers requested them to examine the relatedness extent of the item to the

domain that it measures. Their remarks and comments about the study items and domains were taken into account. As a result of these procedures, the final number of the items was determined at (40) items measuring the successful leadership practices in solving the school problems.

To assure the validity of the instrument, the researchers applied it to a sample of (30) principals. Pearson correlation coefficient between each item and the domain it belongs to was calculated, and the correlation coefficients ranged between (0.61-0.89). The correlation coefficients of the items to the domains were as follows: teachers' problems (0.88), students' problems (0.82), local community and parents' problems (0.80), school environment and supplies' problem (0.91); all of which were at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) significance level.

#### 4.2.2 Reliability of the Study Instrument

The researchers applied the study instrument to a sample consisted of (30) principals, to ensure the reliability of the instrument, employing Chronbach Alpha coefficient. The results showed that the reliability coefficients of the different problems were as follows: teachers' problems (0.86), students' problems (0.90), local community and parents' problems (0.78), school environment and supplies' problem (0.88). The total reliability coefficient was (0.89), indicating that the instrument is reliable and suitable for the study objectives.

#### 4.3 Statistical Analyses

SPSS version 18 was used to analyze the data. Pearson correlation coefficient and Chronbach Alpha correlation coefficient were used to calculate the validity and reliability of the study instrument. T-Test was also used to decide the differences among the responses of the study sample according to its variables.

### 5. Results

Results of the first question: What are the successful leadership practices for solving the school problems by secondary school principals in Irbid Educational Area?

To answer this question, the researchers calculated the means, standard deviations, and the percentage of each item of the four domains defined in the study. The results are summarized and shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and percentages of the responses of the participants to successful leadership practices for solving the school problems

Order	Domains	M- by Grade	No. of Items	M -by Response	%	Practice Degree
1	Practices to solve students' problems	36.65	10	3.66	73.2%	High
2	Practices to solve teachers' problems	35.34	10	3.53	70.6%	High
3	Practices to solve environment and supplies' problems	38.55	11	3.50	70.0%	High
4	Practices to solve community and parents' problems	28.79	9	3.19	63.8%	Medium
Total		139.33	40	3.48	69.6%	High

the students' problems, with (3.66) mean and (73.2%) percentage. They were followed by practices to solve teachers' problems, with (3.53) mean and (70.6%) percentage' and practices for solving the school environment and supplies' problems came third, with (3.50) mean and (70.0%) percentage. These three domains represented the high degree. Finally, the leadership practices for solving the local community and parents' problems came fourth in the last order, with (3.19) mean and (63.8%) percentage; representing the medium degree. The overall results showed that the principal's leadership practices to solve the school problems represented the high degree with an overall mean (3.48) and a (69.6%). The detailed results are shown in Tables (3, 4, 5, and 6).

Table 3 showed means, standard deviation and percentage of the leadership practices of school administrators in solving problems in domain "Practices to solve teachers' problems", the highest item was "Tackling problems among teachers wisely" with  $M=4.33$ , and the least item was "Motivating the outstanding teachers for their remarkable teaching achievements" with  $M=2.87$ .

Table 3. Means, standard deviations and percentages of the participants by the domain items of the leadership practices for solving the teachers' problems

No. in the Questionnaire	Order	Items	Mean	SD	%	Practice Degree
5	1	Tackling problems among teachers wisely	4.33	1.10	86.6%	Very High
8	2	Supporting the new teachers in the school	3.96	1.17	78.2%	High
7	3	Forming committees among the teachers to serve the teaching process	3.81	1.17	76.2%	High
1	4	Realizing fairness in distributing the class schedules among the teachers	3.60	1.37	72.0%	High
10	5	Care for strengthening good relations among teachers	3.55	1.08	71.0%	High
6	6	Cooperation with certain teachers in solving their private problems	3.49	1.16	69.8%	High
2	7	Applying the professional development principle to nominate teachers for training courses	3.45	1.08	69.0%	High
3	8	Equality among teachers in a matter that serves the work interests	3.23	1.45	64.6%	Medium
4	9	Care for retaining the teachers with minimum transference between schools	3.00	1.57	60.0%	Medium
9	10	Motivating the outstanding teachers for their remarkable teaching achievements.	2.87	1.36	57.4%	Medium
Total			3.53	8.42	70.6%	High

Table 4 showed means, standard deviation and percentage of the leadership practices of school administrators in solving problems in domain "Practices for Solving the Students' Problems", the highest item was "Care for relevance of the student numbers with the classroom size" with  $M=4.35$ , and the least item was "Allocating the revenues of the students' school productions for the students" with  $M=2.53$ .

Table 4. Means, standard deviations and percentages of the responses of the participants by the domain items of the leadership practices for solving the students' problems

No. in the Questionnaire	Order	Items	Mean	SD	%	Practice Degree
1	1	Care for relevance of the student numbers with the classroom size	4.35	0.96	87.0%	Very High
2	2	Practical study of the reasons for the repeated student absenteeism	4.23	1.38	84.6%	Very High
7	3	Forming a student council in the school for developing their leadership skills.	4.02	1.59	80.4%	High
9	4	Initiating programs to aware the students about the societal phenomena such as	4.00	1.38	80.0%	High

		violence, drugs, etc.				
10	5	Setting entertainment programs for filling students' leisure times after school times	3.92	1.36	78.4%	High
3	6	Interest in the students' teaching needs	3.90	1.47	78.0%	High
4	7	Arranging extra-curriculum classes to raise the students' achievement level.	3.62	1.35	72.4%	High
6	8	Attracting the charitable foundations to support the needy students	3.31	1.66	66.2%	Medium
5	9	Setting promotional and incentive programs to develop students' talents	2.74	1.58	54.8%	Medium
8	10	Allocating the revenues of the students' school productions for the students	2.52	1.87	50.4%	Low
Total			3.66	6.98	73.2%	High

Table 5 showed means, standard deviation and percentage of the leadership practices of school administrators in solving problems in domain "Practices for Solving the Local Community and Parents' Problems", the highest item was "Forming a periodical council for the parents in the school" with M=4.23, and the least item was "Encouraging populate to develop voluntary work idea of the students" with M=1.88.

Table 5. Means, standard deviations and percentages of the responses of the participants by the domain items of the leadership practices for solving the local community and parents' problems

No. in the Questionnaire	Order	Items	Mean	SD	%	Practice Degree
1	1	Forming a periodical council for the parents in the school	4.23	1.23	87.4%	Very High
2	2	Proving guidance programs for the parents to deal with their children	3.96	1.36	80.4%	High
8	3	Participation of the populate and community members in the specialized seminars to treat the students' problems	3.95	1.12	73.0%	High
5	4	Spontaneous response to the populate for modifying the student's misbehavior	3.87	1.46	72.6%	High
4	5	Activating communication and contacts between the school and parents	3.38	1.50	72.6%	Medium
6	6	Activating the participation principle between the school and the local community institutions	3.35	1.72	71.6%	Medium
3	7	Spontaneous response to the populate for modifying the student's misbehavior	2.22	1.55	71.4%	Low
9	8	Participation in solving the familial problems of the students.	1.90	1.57	69.8%	Medium
7	9	Encouraging populate to develop voluntary work idea of the students.	1.88	1.43	71.0%	Medium
Total			3.19	9.52	63.8%	Medium

Table 6 showed means, standard deviation and percentage of the leadership practices of school administrators in solving problems in domain Practices for Solving the Environment and School Supplies' Problems, the highest item was "Ingraining the idea of school cleanness as if it is student's home" with M=4.46, and the least item was "Attracting venture capitalists of the community to develop the school year" with M=2.74.

Table 6. Means, standard deviations, and percentages of the responses of the participants by the domain items of the leadership practices for solving the environment and school supplies' problems

No. in the Questionnaire	Order	Items	Mean	SD	%	Practice Degree
3	1	Ingraining the idea of school cleanness as if it is student's home	4.46	1.07	89.2%	Very High
4	2	Providing incentives for the students of the cleanest classrooms	3.83	1.05	76.6%	High
5	3	Caring for providing the required supplies for serving the teaching process of the school	3.82	1.42	76.4%	High
6	4	Providing heating and conditioning in the classrooms	3.64	1.62	72.8%	High
11	5	Hygiene monitoring of the students' food at the school	3.61	1.32	72.2%	High
2	6	Activating the idea of the productive school with the teachers and students	3.58	1.45	71.6%	High
7	7	Caring for providing water in the sanitary utilities and their cleanness	3.41	1.60	68.2%	High
1	8	Honoring the students of successful initiatives for serving the school environment.	3.38	1.28	67.6%	Medium
8	9	Caring for the security factor throughout the school facilities	3.27	1.46	63.4%	Medium
10	10	Caring for providing education technology and techniques to the school	2.76	1.64	55.2%	Medium
9	11	Attracting venture capitalists of the community to develop the school year	2.74	1.75	54.8%	Medium
Total			3.50	9.64	68.4%	High

Results of the second question: Are there differences among the responses of the study sample about the leadership practices for solving the school problems, by gender, academic degree and work experience variables?

To answer this question, the means, standard deviations, and t-test were calculated. The results are presented in tables 7, 8, and 9.

Table 7. Means, standard deviation, and T-test results of the responses of the participants to the domain items of successful leadership practices for solving the school problems by gender

Domains	Gender Variable	No.	M	SD	T Value	Sig
Teachers' Problems	Females	251	36.6693	7.06415	3.685	* 0.000
	Males	222	33.8468	9.53128		
Students' Problems	Females	251	37.3984	5.71670	2.466	*0.014
	Males	222	35.8198	8.11702		
Community and Parents' Problems	Females	251	27.7649	5.81348	-3.686	*0.000
	Males	222	29.9505	7.07441		
Environment and School Supplies' Problems	Females	251	39.7450	6.78283	3.537	*0.000
	Males	222	37.2072	8.78822		
The Domains as a Whole	Females	251	141.5777	17.55121	2.213	*0.027
	Males	222	136.8243	28.45638		

The results in Table 7 indicate statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) level in all the domains as well as the total domains level as a whole. The differences were in favor of the females in all the domains and the total domains as a whole, except for solving the problems of the community and parents, which differences were in favor of the males.

Table 8. Means, standard deviations, and T-tests results of the responses of the participants to the domain items of the successful leadership practices for solving the school problems by academic degree

Domains	Academic Variable	Degree	N	M	SD	t	Sig
Teachers' Problems	BA		304	36.1908	7.74020	2.954	*0.003
	MA and More		169	33.8225	9.36326		
Students' Problems	BA		304	36.9803	6.10088	1.349	0.178
	MA and More		169	36.0769	8.33024		
Community and Parents' Problems	BA		304	28.2928	6.24815	-2.237	*0.026
	MA and More		169	29.6864	6.91461		
Environment and School Supplies' Problems	BA		304	39.5395	7.49951	3.696	*0.000
	MA and More		169	36.7811	8.25952		
The Domains as a Whole	BA		304	141.0033	20.56424	2.071	*0.039
	MA and More		169	136.3669	27.62000		

\*= ( $\alpha =0.05$ )

Results in Table 8 show that there are statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) level in the domains of teachers' problem solving and environment and supplies' problem solving; as well as differences at the total domains as a whole level in favor of those holding the BA degree. The results further show differences in solving the problems of the local community and parents in favor of those holding MA and more, and no differences in the domain of students' problem solving.

With regard to Work Experience, the results in Table 9 indicate statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) level in the domains of students' problem solving, and environment and supplies' problem solving; as well as differences in the total domains in favor of those with less than 10 years work experience. Furthermore, there were differences in the domain of local community and parents' problem solving domain, in favor of those with 10 years and more work experiences. Finally, there were no differences in the domain concerning solving the teachers'



problems.

Table 9. Means, standard deviation, and T-tests results of the responses of the participants to the domain items of the successful leadership practices for solving the school problems by work experience

Domains	Experience	N	M	SD	t	Sig
Teachers' Problems	Less than 10 Years	178	35.9045	7.34285	1.123	0.262
	10 years and more	295	35.0068	9.00831		
Students' Problems	Less than 10 Years	178	38.6067	5.47850	4.825	*0.000
	10 years and more	295	35.4814	7.52041		
Community and Parents' Problems	Less than 10 Years	178	27.1685	5.95223	-4.279	*0.000
	10 years and more	295	29.7695	6.66250		
Environment and School Supplies' Problems	Less than 10 Years	178	40.4326	7.11475	4.093	*0.000
	10 years and more	295	37.4203	8.11522		
The Domains as a Whole	Less than 10 Years	178	142.1124	18.56516	2.002	*0.046
	10 years and more	295	137.6780	25.78314		

\*= ( $\alpha=0.05$ )

## 6. Discussion

The study aimed to identify the successful leadership practices of the school principals, which were employed to solve the school problems, whether such problems are pertinent to the teachers, students, local community and parents, or the school environment and supplies.

The results indicated that the most successful leadership practices for solving the teachers' problems were those concerning the wise tackling of the teachers' problems, standing in the side of the new teacher, and forming committees that best serve the teaching process. These are based on the fact that the principal looks forward for solving the problems in a manner that satisfies the whole school community, such as factors for achieving teacher's intimacy and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the support of the principal to the new teacher creates into the teacher a feeling of confidence and strength to engage in work positively. On the other hand, the least practices were those of care for teachers' stability and retention at school, and motivating the remarkable teachers. This result may be construed by that such practices are related to the principal and higher management of education, therefore, his/her leadership practices in this concern are often low and limited.

The results also showed that the most leadership practices concerning the domains of students' problem-solving (Table 3), were caring for the suitable number of students inside the classrooms, as well as a practical study of the reasons of the repeated students' absence. This result may be interpreted based on two dimensions. First, the number of students in the classroom facilitates the teaching process for both the teacher and student alike. Second, the inappropriate classroom environment may be a ground for the repeated students' absence. In other words, these two practices have a role in solving the students' problems. Meanwhile, the lowest practices in this concern were: setting incentive programs for the students, and allocating revenues of the school products to the students. This result could be explained built on that the incentive programs have not yet approached the seriousness status in the leadership practices. Perhaps, these two items or practices may not be under the control of the school leadership alone.

As for the domain of solving the problems of the local community and parents, the results had indicated that the most successful practices in this aspect were: forming a periodical parents' council and providing them guidelines showing them how to deal with their children's problems. This result could be explained based on that this is a basic foundation to achieve integrity between the role of the school and parents. However, the least practices in this domain were: participation in students' familial problem solving, and encouraging populate to participate in the students' voluntary work. The researcher construes this result by that certain family problems may go beyond the role of the school, and that the voluntary work may be related to other institutions in the community.

With respect to the school environment and supplies' problem, the results showed that the most successful leadership practice of this domain was caring for the school cleanness. A result which could be explained based on

that school cleanness is a preventive factor in favor of the students against diseases; it increases students' love to their school, and eagerness to remain in it as well. On the other hand, the least practices in this domain were: providing technology and attraction of the parents to develop the school. This result may also be construed on the fact that providing technology is an issue of the higher management; but the persistent demand falls within the tasks of the successful leadership. In addition, some parents may have not sufficient experience in the educational work.

The results further indicated that the most successful leadership practices of the school principal in solving the school problems were as per the following order: student's problem solving, teachers' problem solving, and school environment and supplies' problem solving, respectively. These domains achieved high degree in the leadership practices of the school principal. On the other hand, solving the problems of the local community and parents came fourth and last, with a medium practice degree. The researcher interprets this result by that the successful leadership practices are those that care for students and their problems, as solving the students' problems will lead to overcoming many other obstacles and problems, whether such problems were related to the teachers or the school environment, or even to certain problems of the local community and parents. In this concern, a study by Al-Lahwani (2007), maintained that the students' problems have effects on other problems that the school is seeking to solve, especially the problem of overcrowded classrooms. A study conducted by Al-Lawati (1992) showed that the school leadership faces many problems related to the school building, public utilities and supplies that reflect on the students' behavioral and educational problems. However, the current study may be in line with the study of Ashour (2011), and Anderson (2000), which indicated that the leadership practices of the school principals are poor in solving the problems of the local community.

Based on the values of the means and T-Test (Table 7), the results showed differences among the principals' responses attributed to gender in all the domains at the level of the domains as a whole. The differences were in favor of the females, save for the community and parents' problem solving domain, which were in favor of the males, as a result of the comparison of the means. The researcher explains this by that the female, in her leadership, may be more adherent to the rules and laws, and too alert not to fall in problems that may affect her occupational and social status. This result is in agreement with the results of a study by Qishta (2009), and Al-Hayek (2000), where they both stated differences in the school leadership attributed to the gender variable, in favor of the females.

As for the domains as a whole, the results indicated the existence of differences attributed to the academic degree (Table 8), and differences in teachers' problem solving, school environment and supplies' problems, in favor of the BA Degree holders. On the other hand, there were differences in the domain of solving the problems of the community and parents in favor of those holding MA and more. This result is imputed to the interest of the teachers holding BA degrees, who form their work team; and the interest of those holding higher degrees in the local community, being a supporter of their school leadership. Still, the results did not indicate differences in the students' domain, since the principals of difference academic degrees are paying special attention to the students, who represent the pivot of the teaching process. This result is in line with the study of Al-Hiyari (1998) which showed differences ascribed to the academic degree variable.

The results further showed statistically significant differences in the domains as a whole attributed to the years of experience variable (Table 9), in the domains of solving the students' problems, as well as solving the problems of the school environment and supplies, in favor of those having less than 10 years' work experience. On the other hand, there were differences in the domain of solving the problems of the community and parents, in favor of those having more than 10 years' experience. This is explained by that the less-experienced principals focus on the school teachers and workers, in addition to their interest in the school environment and providing the required equipments and supplies, which is, in turn, based on their belief that the school is their first and last institution. Meanwhile, those of longer experience periods, have had their relations extended outside the school walls, and have approached the external environment, the local community and the parents. This may be further ascribed to the role of the long experience and interaction of the principals with the external surrounding more than those of shorter experience periods. Moreover, the results did not show significant differences in the teachers' domain, which is due to the interest of the principals of difference experiences in the teachers, who are assigned responsibilities and duties that may reinforce the school leadership in achieving its educational and teaching tasks, as the teachers form the foundation of the teaching process. This result is in agreement with that of Al-Hiyari (1998), and Peterson (2006) which found differences attributed to the work experience periods.

## 7. Conclusion

The study had shown that the successful leadership practices of the school principals in solving the school problems were at high degree, except for problems concerning the local community and parents' problem solving,

which came with a medium degree. These findings were based on the responses of the study sample, which comprised (473) male and female principals, who were administered a questionnaire prepared by the researchers after revising the theoretical frameworks, and conducting interviews and reconnaissance studies.

This means a call for the need of taking the appropriate procedures by the education policy in the area, to develop the leading skills in solving the problems concerning the local community and parents. Furthermore, principals should be empowered a level of powers that allowing them to retain the teachers in the same school, and avoid their transference among many schools. They also need further powers concerning providing different incentives to the outstanding teachers; open opportunities before the school principals to the students' products, especially in the vocational education, and allocating these revenues for the benefits of the students; and reinforce the school openness to achieve the societal partnership principle with the school. In this concern, the study results found that the leadership practices of the principals toward the community are medium; a result that was supported and confirmed in the study conducted by Ashour (2011).

Due to the significance of defining the leadership practices and school leadership methods, as well as the role of the principal as a leader, I had reviewed many local and international studies, but the current study is unique in being devoted to identify the abilities of the school leadership in solving the school problems.

The researcher hopes that the results of this study will be in the hands of the school leaderships and decision makers in the higher management of education, so as to implement programs that reinforce the position of the principal as an educational leader, overcoming the hurdles and different problems that impede the educational and teaching process course. The researcher further hopes that the concerned authorities will take into account the recommendations of this study.

## 8. Recommendations

In the light of the study literature and field results, the researchers proposed the following recommendations:

- 1) The focus of the school leadership practices by the principal should be on achieving the school partnership principle with the local community. Focus also should be on implementing activities that care for the local community, as well as the need for honoring the members of the local community and students' parents who are cooperating with the school.
- 2) Availing opportunities before the principals to join training courses on how to solve the work problems, mechanisms to approach suitable solutions, and methods for suitable decision-taking based on accurate studies and information.
- 3) Empowering the school principals more powers that authorize him/her apply the productive school principle, as well as investing the revenues to serve the school and the students alike.
- 4) Training the school principals on scientific research for solving the school problems through scientific methods.

## 9. Proposed Scientific Studies

In addition to the above, the researchers suggest the following subjects for future research:

- 1) Conducting a study defining the extent of the local community and parents' cooperation with the schools.
- 2) Reasons of the poor partnership between the school and local community institutions.
- 3) Constructing a measurement to define the successful educational leader at schools.

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