Exploring Credible Leadership in International Schools in Jeddah

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Research Article

ABSTRACT

This study explored credible leadership in international schools in Jeddah particularly connections between leadership practice and the individual leadership practice. The study questions were: To what degree international schools' leaders in Jeddah perceive their skills in practicing the six principles of Kouzes and Posner? and does authentic leadership in international schools' leaders differ based on the leader's culture and religion? Data was gathered through interviews using semi-structured questions and analyzed qualitatively against Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Leadership, a teachable and measurable framework. The study's findings illustrated differences in some themes in practicing leadership, such as serving a purpose and sustaining hope. The study limitation was on the limited sample size and the study recommends the need to consider the existing cultural and religious background in the study of leadership practices.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership skills are the fundamental attributes desired to run any institution. In recent years, technological changes, social, political, cultural, and religious aspects have imposed changes that bring reforms in educational systems. Notably, most schools are rapidly embracing the changes as the leaders become more credible and authentic [1]. The changes are gradually reshaping the schools' external environment, such as government policies. International schools are also experiencing this global phenomenon of changes. Saudi Arabian schools have had some turbulent changes for the last few decades, which have triggered the need to conduct research that focus on determining the effectiveness of credible and authentic leaders in bringing reforms in the education sector [2]. International schools' leaders are responsible for preparing the students with relevant leadership skills to bridge

the gap between the educational and organizational outcomes. The foundation of successful implementation of reforms in International schools depends on how the key players such as principals, policymakers, and stakeholders perceive the meaning of their role in the reform process. School leadership has a significant role in ensuring the success of reforms since they have a tremendous influence on the entire school fraternity [3]. It is argued that leaders act as a catalyst for bringing reforms in schools; therefore, leadership credibility and authenticity are of key essence in realizing the desired success.

Empirical literature in leadership ascertains that credibility and authenticity allow leaders and followers to raise one another at the most significant leadership level. Credible and authentic leaders focus on growing their followers to the fullness of their potential, which is the highest level of motivation [4]. It becomes the most effective because leaders ensure effectiveness in implementing desired changes; therefore, they take the front line in pushing reform agenda. The qualities of credible and authentic leaders can build a significant level of commitment to the stakeholders, especially teachers and other junior staff working in different learning institutions [5]. Employees in International schools in Saudi Arabia can connect with the complex and uncertain nature of the changes because they trust the leaders' ability to promote the capacity necessary to implement the positive agendas [2]. Credible leadership, therefore, is essential to organizational growth, building a shared vision, and establishing policies and procedures needed for transformation efforts. Conducted empirical research that identified a series of qualities that a credible and authentic leader must possess [4]. These principles are; discovering self, appreciating constituents, affirming shared values, developing capacity, serving a purpose, and sustaining hope. A leader that practices these qualities knows how to lead, especially during difficult situations. However, it is essential to conduct qualitative research that seeks to shed more light on the experiences of leaders' credibility in International schools in Saudi Arabia. The study aims at determining the effectiveness of leadership credibility in school management.

Purpose of the study and research questions

The study's purpose was to determine to what degree international schools' leaders perceive their skills in practicing the six principles of Kouzes and Posner. The following study questions guided the study:

1. To what degree international schools' leaders in Jeddah perceive their skills in practicing the six principles of Kouzes and Posner?
2. Does authentic leadership in international schools' leaders differ based on the leader's culture and religion?

Significance of study

There exists a gap in the literature that examines the perception of a leader's skills in practicing the six principles of Kouzes and Posner. As a result, there is a need for a deeper understanding of the perception of leaders as far as their skills are concerned. The possibility that leaders have a good perception of their skills that matches Kouzes and Posner's is minimal; thus, the skills developed would affect the outcome [4]. Through the analysis of international schools' leaders' perception of their skills to match the practices and the principles of Kouzes and Posner, the study would develop an approach to leadership in international school with preferred competencies of credible leadership that would benefit the schools constituents and the school community.

Theoretical background

Ever since civilization began, leadership has been very vital to humans' endeavors especially in educational settings. Despite the leadership behavior pattern varying across cultures and over time, leadership has been considered critical [6]. The concept of leadership remains a topic of interest to research to date. Leadership phenomena began with the work of Max Weber, the sociologist, and the study has further been divided into three primary phases [7]. Each phase is characterized by the focus of interest and study strategy identifying a leader's traits. The second phase addresses the leader's behaviors, while the third stage centers on the situation that leader's face and the style of leadership. Due to inconsistent methodology patterns and findings, there has been a problem resulting from dissatisfaction with behaviors, credibility, and authenticity. Works offer a theoretical framework for this study. The two authors developed a theory that credible leaders apply particular practices and principles in their work. The study examined the practices and principles of the leaders in international schools and identified a framework to manifest the Kouzes and Posner leadership practices in the context of international schools' leaders [7]. Theoretically, the practices and the principles of application in shoos leadership would enhance the learning environment, thus improving performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a link between a leader's skills and credible leadership [8]. Actually, the impact of leadership on credibility was confirmed by Quist. Nonetheless, very little research exists to align leaders' skills with a validated study-based framework [9]. It is worth noting that the roles and challenges of leaders are high most of the time [10]. Previous studies agree that credible leaders positively impact the performance of any organization [9-12]. According to credible leaders support achievement and are essential in building a successful organization [13]. However, many governments and state organizations make leading an international school challenging to lead than ever before.

Previous studies have also explored the increased level of credibility for school leaders, hence the potential impact of credibility associated with leaders depicts that monitoring and reporting schools' progress improves school performance [14]. There are various emerging trends in leadership skills and their implication on leadership credibility. One of the leadership skills outlined by is the ability to identify with new trends. Due to the fact that international schools have become very racially and culturally diverse, leaders are needed to consider testing their skills to offer professional leadership in schools [15]. This is because educational standards have become sensitive, and the need of the children is underserved [16]. The leaders, therefore, need to be vigilant to maintain and act as agents of change and ensure credibility.

Leaders are responsible for creating and managing the performance of schools, but most of the time, the relationship between credible leadership and performance is underreported [17]. The rate of school performance based on the skills of the leaders is difficult and important in equal measures [15]. The international school's leadership should reinforce the need for credible schools' leadership in contemporary society. There has been a rediscovery of credible leaders since most of them have an influence on learning and teaching [1]. Many of the leaders are resistant to professional progress opportunities despite the emphasis on resources and time as they relate to performance and leadership authenticity.

Credible leaders are sensitive to efforts to remediate them by developing credibility and authenticity. The effects of credible leaders on the performance of international schools evaluation show that practices and the principle of institutions influence leaders [18]. Therefore, it is vital for leaders to be courageous in contemporary society to align with the goals and missions of schools. This is in addition to intelligence, tolerance, honesty and integrity. Credible leaders need to put the interest of students first even when it does not make them comfortable [15]. It is also vital for credible leaders to identify and encourage subordinates to work towards a common goal.

The role of a credible leader cannot be ignored as it involves leaders across all sectors [19]. When assigning roles to the workers, credible leaders must recognize and articulate good instruction and be aware of the literary elements needed in international schools since the diverse population poses a language and cultural gap in the community. Additionally, credible leaders should possess other characteristics and follow concepts of strong leadership that include visibility and educational background [20].

Credibility leadership refers to practices of leading any organization through positive change [21]. Primarily, the components of credible leadership include trust, respect, and affinity with followers [22]. Students feel the indirect effects on the components on credible leadership [18]. Since the interaction of the leaders and the entire organization is vital in the quest for achievement and performance, leaders' commitment contributes to satisfaction with the profession. In the arena of credibility, leadership highlighting the idea of authenticity and credibility illustrate that the leader and the worker inspire one another, thus creating a productive and positive bond [2]. Authenticity and credibility among leaders denote an interaction between the followers and the leaders in a non-binding manner.

History of kouzes and posner

The research project that Kouzes and Posner started in 1983 came about due to the desire to learn individuals successfully when they were leading institutions [7]. The primary focus of Kouzes and Posner was the patterns that led to the success [15]. As a result, the study led to the persona based survey development that included open-ended questions. As of then, Kouzes and Posner administered more than 500 surveys where they included more than 80 managers who took part in surveys and interviews [7]. Posner and Kouzes have expanded their survey to leaders in institutions such as churches, schools, communities, and government. Kouzes and Posner have expanded their work into the business over the years. The application of leadership principles and practices illustrate the breadth and depth of this study's recognition of Kouzes and Posner's work.

Leadership researches have been conducted over the last few decades. These researches have revealed a lot of leadership traits and theories that require more investigations of moderating and mediating related features. Leadership is not a position but a collection of behaviors and practices that act as a guideline that helps the organization remain focused on organizational goals. Effective leaders must effect changes, have outstanding experience and knowledge, and create an environment that allows their followers to realize their full potential [23]. Initially, followers used to rate leaders depending on the reported performance within the organization instead of focusing on the behavior and abilities. However, leadership is not in a leader's role but the psychology of the followers within a particular social group. The perception and expectations of followers are the main determinants of the success or failure of a leader [4]. The principles described by Kouzes and Posner are vital components of credible leadership. It is paramount to understand how each of these principles helps in developing credible leaders.

Discovering self

The initial stage of being a credible leader is self-awareness, which helps a leader be true to self. Self-realization is the foundation of credible leadership because it is the basis for personal commitment and the driving force that pushes a leader to the said commitment [24]. Self-discovery relates to personal values that determine what a leader should do or not. Values are life-directing principles that relate to personal and social affairs.

A credible leader that has fully discovered self can model the way by setting the example to the constituents. Leaders' self-awareness is shown by reflecting on their strengths, weaknesses, and values, hence telling their talents and gifts [7]. A self-discovered leader concentrates on the strengths to maximize their potential to realize organizational goals. In the process of self-discovery, credible leaders accept their weaknesses and work hard to improve in these areas [20]. A self-discovered leader understands their perception of themselves and also knows how other people perceive them. They are cautious of their action because they fully understand how their actions affect other people. Self-discovered credible leaders see the effort that has a positive or negative impact on the people they are leading [7]. A self-aware leader builds commitment through routine actions that determine the momentum of the organization. Self-discovered leaders can create programs with excellence and spearhead the team in implementation. They can set high standards for interpersonal relationships within the organization. They put principles on how people should be treated [12]. They also introduce philosophy to pursue organizational goals to make the company look unique and distinctive.

Appreciating constituents

Credible leaders appreciate the ideas given by the constituents [25]. They encourage the followers to provide their views and also share their thoughts. The arguments raised are then discussed openly until the team settles with the most viable one. When a leader recognizes the contributions of team members and appraises them both privately and publicly, it gives the followers satisfaction that boosts the morale [26]. It brings out the benefits associated with the construct of positive psychological capital. When combined with personality traits such as hope, resilience, self-efficacy, and optimism, it improves the overall organizational outcome [1]. The inclusion of the junior staff in decision-making makes them feel like part of the organization. They own the vision and put all the effort into ensuring that the company realizes the set goals.

Affirming shared values

A credible leader should visualize ideal ways of organization's operations to ensure the desired successful results. According to, the inspirational qualities of a leader are fundamental in cultivating and maintaining organizational culture [27]. A leader is responsible for outwardly focusing on understanding and appealing to the followers' values for the organization's interest. A credible leader affirms shared values to unify people and promote commitment to a shared future that they look forward to creating [15]. A credible leader believes that the team can make a difference in the organization beyond a shadow of a doubt. They envision the future then create an ideal and

unique image of what the organization intends to look like. A credible leader helps the constituents to grasp the vision by portraying positivity, hoping that followers will run with the vision. Credible leaders show enthusiasm and excitement for the organizational vision through genuineness, skillful positive language, and personal energy [7].

Serving a purpose

A credible leader should have a clear vision of the organization and be able to communicate the same to all stakeholders. A leader with a clear vision that is well-understood by all the players ensures that the effort is towards actualization of this vision. The accuracy of the leader in articulating the organizational vision together with shared values among all the stakeholders irrespective of the position held encourages cooperative effort from all parties [13]. Credible leaders share their views freely using strong communication skills to pass the information to the followers to control their emotions indirectly. However, the leader shares the vision with a clear motive rather than using the position to manipulate the followers.

Developing capacity

Credible leaders develop capacity by creating new ideas, recognizing the new concepts introduced by the followers, offer the necessary support to implement the new initiative. Leaders willingly challenge the system to make room for the implementation of the new ideas. Leaders challenge constituents to take responsibilities that would challenge their skills and abilities. Employees challenged to take responsibility beyond their knowledge, skills, and competencies will look for innovative ways to help them accomplish the task. The leaders allow them to learn, hence improving their capacity. Credible leaders allow their followers to experiment and take risks in new approaches, a recommendable way of enhancing skills, knowledge, and competencies. Credible leaders are also not afraid of making mistakes; neither limits the followers from exploring to avoid mistakes [7,12]. Instead of punishing failures, they encourage them, arguing that such errors give people an opportunity to learn. Credible leaders also admit their mistakes without passing blame.

Sustaining hope

A credible leader allows others to act, which promotes collaborations and empowerment among employees. A leader involves them in planning and will enable them to exercise their freedom in decision-making [4]. A credible leader that fully respects the members allows them to work without unnecessary supervision until they realize their full potential. Credible leaders focus on creating a favorable working environment giving assurance of job security [28]. They strive to create a friendly atmosphere where all the constituents uphold trust and human dignity. In their effort of appreciating the members, credible leaders ensure that each employee feels capable and empowered to act in the respective positions. Credible leaders that appreciate their constituents consider the interests of others, which allow them to carry the burden of the organization comfortably. Employees take responsibility for the organizational growth since they feel appreciated and respected.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted among international school principals in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Interviews were conducted with three principals with different backgrounds and experiences. The interviewees had served as international

school leaders for at least 10 years in different contexts. The leaders' who were all expatriates had a diverse background and religious affiliations namely: Christian, Muslim and a non-believer in deities. The interviewee's geographical origin was Northern America, Middle East and Africa. The study used semi-structured questions and was held in a central venue where the interviewees were comfortable [29]. The data was collected using open-ended questions asked in a face-to-face interview. The data was recorded through audio-recording and taking notes. The data was later compiled and analyzed to identify common themes and concepts from the three participants. The data was later coded and classified into broad categories of leadership concepts arising from the interview questions aimed at determining the leaders' perception based on Kouzes and Posner's leadership principles [30].

Table 1. Questions and responses on self-discovery.

Question	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3
1. What do you consider as your greatest strength as a leader in the institution?	My team, my charisma, my vision	My control, my planning, my people skills,	My team, my patience, my planning
2. What do you think is the greatest weakness in your leadership?	I share too much, and I am open-minded.	I over plan/ overthink	I give too many chances.
3. What do you think can be the best way to maximize the strength and reduce the weakness?	Understand my audience	Trust the process and other people.	Become more assertive
4. Do you think the said weakness can affect the future of the company?	Yes, in sensitive issues leaking.	Yes, when decisions are needed immediately	Yes, when people don't perform.
5. Do you think the employees are aware of your weakness? If yes, do you think they can use the same to sabotage your leadership?	Yes, because I am a public person	Not really, they think that is my job.	Yes, that can take me for granted that they will have a second chance
6. If employees in your school are asked to describe you as their leader, do you think they can give your actual image?	Absolutely, I am an open book.	They think I am very smart.	They think I am just a nice guy.

The questions focused on understanding the level of leaders' self-awareness. The objective was to discover how each leader perceives his abilities in the leadership skills employed and how the followers think of him. The questions also aimed at determining leaders' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and how they plan to maximize the strengths and reduce the effects of the weaknesses. The information was necessary for the study because it is used to know the degree of the principal's self-discovery and its impact on the school's performance (Table 1).

Table 2. Questions and responses on appreciating constituents.

Question	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3
1. Do you think it is important to get ideas from junior staff such as school janitors?	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. When you have frequent meetings involving making minor decisions concerning the institute, do you involve junior staff?	I involve everyone	Only top management	I listen to all
3. Have you ever implemented an idea raised by staff, but it did not succeed as it was intended? If yes, how did you handle the situations?	Yes, the review of staff policies, but they flopped. We reviewed the policies together with some staff and suggested the needed amendments.	Yes, the preparation of staff was scheduled, and they succeeded.	Yes, the recruitment of assistant teachers they loved it.
4. Do you believe in your staff such that you can let them run a project without your supervision?	Yes	It depends	Yes

The questions in this category focused on determining the leaders' perception of the junior staff in decision making process. The inclusion of all team members is vital since it helps them to own the organization which subsequently results to high productivity. The questions sought to understand the level of inclusion of junior staff in decision-making process. The questions also focused on discovery the level of trust that the leader has on the followers' contribution and implementation of ideas (Table 2).

Table 3. Questions and responses on affirming values.

Question	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3
1. Do you have a code of conduct that everyone in the organization strictly observes?	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Does everybody know about the disciplinary action taken for breaking the values stipulated in the code of conduct?	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Does the school have an organizational structure? If yes, do you think the staff respect it and reports accordingly?	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. As a school leader, how do you ensure healthy interpersonal relationships among the employees?	Through common interaction and co-planning of activities	Through sports and cultural events	Through groups and meetings

The question on affirming values focuses on understanding the school culture and the relationships between leaders and followers. The aim is to determine the interpersonal relations by determining the leader's effort towards ensuring healthy working relationships among all the staff—the question aimed at determining whether the leaders have instituted values that govern the interrelationships within the organizations. The objective of these questions was to know whether the leader has set regulations that define how the employees should treat one another. The questions also focused on understanding whether the organizations had a structure that shows the order of hierarchy that enables the staff to know the reporting structure (Table 3).

Table 4. Questions and responses on serving the purpose.

Question	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3
1. Where do you see the school in the next five years?	We are building a new campus.	Students will perform better.	More students, more staff
2. Do you think anything should be done to help all the stakeholders direct their energy towards the realization of organizational goals?	More collaboration with stakeholders	More reporting of progress from the strategic plans	Involvement of stakeholders in school activities
3. Do you think the employees understand the school vision and are willing to run with it? If not, do you have any plan of open-ended questioning them own the vision?	Yes	Yes	Yes

These questions focused on the leader's vision of the school. The research aimed at determining whether the leader has a clear vision with both short-term and long-term objectives. The questions focused on determining whether leaders communicated the vision to the stakeholders to ensure that all the effort is directed towards achieving a common goal. The questions also focused on knowing whether the leaders have a strategy to achieve the objective within the stipulated timeframe (Table 4).

Table 5. Questions and responses on developing capacity.

Question	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3
1. Does the institution facilitate on-job-training programs?	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Do you have any innovative projects running within the schools that have been birthed from employees' initiatives?	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Do you have any programs that focus on improving employees' skills, knowledge, and competencies?	Yes	Yes	Yes

The question on building capacity focused on understanding whether the leader was intentional on succession plan through improving the employees' knowledge, skills, and competencies. Succession planning involves a systematic and integrated approach to identify, develop, and retain employees. It is a fundamental motivation in working since it prepares employees for the vital role by giving assignments and offering developmental skills. The questions interrogated the leader on the plans to prepare the employees for a leadership position in the future (Table 5).

Table 6. Questions and responses on sustaining hope.

Question	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3
1. How do you give assurance of job security to the employees?	Evaluation and constant feedback	Policies and procedures that safeguard their jobs	Professional development program and succession planning that involves everyone
2. Assuming that some of the ideas introduced by the juniors did not yield the expected result. As a leader, how do you motivate such employees to continue contributing their ideas without think of themselves as failures?	We are a team, and all ideas are team ideas.	I give them an opportunity for the next time.	I provide constant feedback and reinforcement of small wins.

The questions about sustaining hope were to determine whether the leader knows how to assure the employees about the job security and other motivations that enable them to continue supporting the company's vision. The questions were more on the leader's ability to handle the emotional aspects of the employees (Table 6).

RESULTS

The research explored the use and application of leadership practices as shown in the Kouzes and Posner practices. The open-ended semi-structured questions consisted of items that offered reliable and valid feedback about respondents' behaviors and skills. The open-ended questions instrument was administered to identify the three international school leaders' participants and discuss Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices as applied in school. The research addressed the question as follows.

To what degree do international school leaders in Jeddah perceive their skills in practicing the six principles of Kouzes and Posner?

Kouzes and Posner's open-ended questions that the three leaders responded measured the use of the five leadership practices [7]. It is worth noting that a comprehensive application process was needed to give the leaders permission to participate in the study. After emailing the open-ended questions survey and also informed consent, the researcher followed up with a call to each participant. For each statement on the survey, the participants indicated the frequency they engaged in the behaviors. The examination was based on the results of open-ended questions analysis. The questions to what degree do international school leaders in Jeddah perceive their skills in practicing the six principles of Kouzes and Posner include self-discovering, appreciating constituents, affirming shared values, developing capacity, serving a purpose and sustaining hope?

The study focused on three participants in international school leaders in Jeddah leadership. Open-ended questions were asked each participant and each transcript's responses indicated the engagement score for each leadership. The interview report was completed, and the results generated a list of the three leader's leadership practices. The interview transcripts of each leader were analyzed to identify emergent discussion themes. Several qualitative themes related to research questions were determined. The themes were labeled as Kouzes and Posner's five practices of self-discovering, appreciating constituents, affirming shared values, developing capacity, serving a purpose and sustaining hope [7]. The frequencies of themes were analyzed to determine the differences and similarities among the three participants.

Theme analysis research

Research question 1

To what degree do international school leaders in Jeddah perceive their skills in practicing the six principles of Kouzes and Posner?

The open-ended questions were asked to every participant, and they were encouraged to explore the valued leadership practices and skills. One participant stated that leaders must be able to self-discover before leading others. The second participant discussed self-discovery as a necessity for leading others, while the third participant self-discovery as the desired quality. Regarding the significance of the skills related to Kouzes and Posner's five practices, the three participants referenced behaviors as linked to the practices. Of the practices appreciating constituents was identified by the three participants, with one stating that whether one thinks about it or not, appreciating constituents is very critical. The affirming shared values and developing capacity were less frequently mentioned among the three participants than other themes of leadership quality and behaviors. Serving a purpose

and sustaining hope were themes that brought out various differences, which can be attributed to differences in belief or religious backgrounds among the three participants.

Research question 2

Does authentic leadership in international schools differ based on the leader's culture and religion?

The three participants indicated some exceptions in their beliefs, which led to differences in the Kouzes and Posner leadership practices. The participants were asked about their culture and religions when practicing leadership. Two of the participant specified the need for religion and culture-based education in institutions. One of the participants stated that it is crucial to learn religions because it lays the foundation for credible and authentic leadership. Culture and religion are impactful to followers. Another participant added that religious leadership helps leaders become people persons. The three participants expressed concern about leadership devoid of culture and any religious foundation. The themes identified having various differences among the participants on Kouzes and Posner leadership were serving a purpose and sustaining hope.

The three participants had different viewpoints concerning serving a purpose. This was attributed to their religious background and cultural difference. Interestingly, personality behaviors such as credibility, authenticity and honesty were perceived as valuable among the two participants that had a similar religious background, as opposed to the third participant. It is probably vital to comprehend and make good judgment and authenticity when upholding leadership values in the organization and when leaders exhibit them. The theme valued by leaders in equal measure based on Kouzes and Posner's five practices of exemplary leadership included self-discovering, appreciating constituents, affirming shared values and developing capacity. However, serving a purpose and sustaining hope were themes that leaders had reservations due to religious and cultural differences.

DISCUSSION

In the past few years, there has been significant growth in the number of research on credible leadership. With the exceptions of a few research studies in a few countries, minimal scientific research work on credible leadership exists, especially in international schools' leadership in Saudi Arabia. Jeddah is not an exception. Several models and measurement instruments have been developed to measure leadership behaviors. The instrument's availability and validity across cultures provide a strong case for examining behaviors based on Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices framework [7]. Therefore, the study purpose was to examine the application of Kouzes and Posner leadership's practices in international schools in Jeddah.

School leaders' credible leadership practices are vital as the institution and community depend on them. The initiatives that are reformed-based increases credibility and authenticity among the leaders. Credible leadership is a fundamental factor in achieving and supporting good performance [18]. The increased credibility and authenticity among leaders dictates a need for a research-based framework of elementary leadership practices. Based on Kouzes and Posner, five leadership practices include self-discovering, appreciating constituents, affirming shared values, developing capacity, serving a purpose and sustaining hope.

The finding in the study pointed to a substantial gap in understanding the influence of religion and culture on leadership. The gap is critical for the international schools struggling with leadership such as international schools in Jeddah whose approaches differ but can be enhanced while preserving their religious and cultural identities.

Most writing about authentic and credible leadership has paid little attention to such considerations [7]. In addition, the studies make it easier for international researchers to compare organizations in applying Kouzes and Posner leadership practices in school contexts.

The participants echoed most of Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices describing self-discovering, appreciating constituents, affirming shared values and developing capacity as most values emerged among the three participants. It is worth noting that Kouzes and Posner credible leadership practices and principles are established as a list of valued valid leadership behaviors [18]. Though there was an overlap in participants' responses, there was a disconnect between Christian and atheist participants in some leadership practices. There was a lack of clear responses regarding sustaining hope and serving a purpose. Perhaps due to the cultural and religious background where some practices receive little attention or are taken for granted.

The results in the study revealed that Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices encompassing self-discovering, appreciating constituents, affirming shared values and developing capacity, serving a purpose and sustaining hope as perceived by leaders are practiced moderately. These results can be justified provided the narrow practices in international schools' leadership in Jeddah. Therefore, attention should be given to Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices especially sustaining hope and serving a purpose. If applied in schools, Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices can serve as the basis for a school leader to assess their behaviors and qualities. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will be used as a starting point for further research in the application of Kouzes and Posner leadership practices international schools, stimulating further qualitative research to offer valuable insight for leaders in other organizations.

However, practicing sustaining hope was placed at the lowest which is inconsistent with the vitality of sustaining hope, as cited in many educational leadership scholars. This shows that these themes need to be studied and applied in leadership, not neglected. A particular emphasis should be placed on the sustaining hope theme as hope is a prod that is powerful. Sustaining hope attracts and energizes leaders despite their religious background, creates meaning among the leaders, creates a bridge between the past and the future, and establishes a standard of excellence among the leadership through unrelenting optimism [18]. Leaders offer a real sense of purpose that promotes focus and excellent achievement to all followers regardless of their cultural or religious backgrounds.

Another results strand among the participants distinguished among Muslims, Christian and atheists in the themes of serving a purpose and sustaining hope in favor of Christian and Muslim and themes of self-discovering and appreciating constituents in favor of atheists. These findings were consistent with comparing Christian, atheist and Muslim participants. The results could be justified because self-discovering, appreciating constituents with others, and dedicating ties is easier to all people regardless of their religious or cultural backgrounds than serving a purpose and sustaining hope commonly practices in international schools' culture.

Limitations of the study

The greatest limitation of the research is the lack of a wider sample as there were only three participants to respond to the open-ended semi–structured questions. The imbalance of the participant's cultural and religious background may limit the comparability of the themes. The degree of agreement in the qualitative basis of the participants can be poor, thus questioning the reliability of the responses.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In the practice of Kouzes and Posner leadership in international schools in Jeddah, it is appropriate to conclude from the data collected that the participants followed the Kouzes and Posner leadership practices. The study's findings illustrated differences in some themes in practicing leadership, such as serving a purpose and sustaining hope. The result could be justified due to cultural and religious background of the participating leaders.

Kouzes and Posner leadership practices produced a set of leadership behaviors that are widely acknowledged and used. This study applied Kouzes and Posner's work to the practices of international school in Jeddah in order to fill a research gap in the domain of leadership practices. The research also discovered a Kouzes and Posner leadership paradigm for international schools' leaders in Jeddah which described such traits. For each of the five Kouzes and Posner leadership strategies as they apply to the international schools' leaders in Jeddah, the qualitative study yielded particular themes. These topics were utilized to create a very specific list of international schools' leadership practice that were connected with the Kouzes and Posner Leadership Practices. For each of the five Kouzes and Posner leadership techniques, the research findings explain basic leadership behaviors. In addition, a comparison of the results revealed connections between Kouzes and Posner leadership practice and the individual leadership practice of the three participant school leaders.

There is still much to be learned about Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices in international schools' in Jeddah and other organizations. In the context of increasing and enhancing Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices, there is a need to consider the existing cultural and religious background. This study thus opens doors for future research concerning additional factors related to the concept of credible leadership.

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