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TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF FEMALE
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE 1948 ARAB REGION: OBSTACLES AND
MEANS OF IMPROVEMENT

Nadia Ghalia, PhD*

**Trainings manger in international studies department, Israel*

****Corresponding Author:-***

CHAPTER I

STUDY BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

School plays an active role in constructing and crystallizing the identity of young generations. School also strengthens their skills and character, and plays an essential organizational role beside family. In addition to the original role of imparting information and developing academic and social skills, schools have been taking upon themselves to expand their duties, especially during the globalization era. Schools develop the tools and skills that students need for facing conflicts and fast changes in our world today.

Successful schools are led by a select educational team who steer and guide the teaching and learning process coping with the inner and outer environment of the school (Fullan, 2005; Harris, 2002). The principal represents the school leadership and he is considered the educational leader, as he performs highly important tasks. The role of the principal is not restricted solely to managing and supervising schools. The principal's new role depends on improving the educational process.

The school's success in achieving goals and missions depends on the manner in which the principal manages the school and on his or her leadership style and on his or her successful leadership traits that are reflected in his character and capability to employ his or her abilities in constructive work for establishing positive human relationships with teachers and for improving their work conditions and stimulating them for ongoing giving (Ahmad, 2003).

Educational studies, in general, and educational leadership studies, in particular, support the vital role of educational leadership in achieving school quality including teaching, learning, and educational preparation of students. These studies indicate the importance of preparing an educational leadership crew that heads toward leading an appropriate educational change (Fullan, 2005; Harris, 2002).

A successful leader relies on a meaningful vision for individuals, a vision that carries important goals for the institution and its members and has a clear work plan with priorities and that continuously aims at achieving the best. In addition, this vision draws the road map and the picture of the institution in a few years (Al-Taman, 1997).

The principal's role, which constitutes a great duty, requires the principal to possess many skills. The most important skill that a principal needs are: Leadership and capability to develop a comprehensive educational vision of the school role, the concept of education and teaching, the goals, the appropriate strategies that help achieve goals, appraisal standards, follow-up, and evaluation of these goals (Watad, 2003).

Over the last few decades the leadership role of women in education has emerged, just like in other domains (Arar, 2007; Benjamin, 2003). Esa (2006) indicated that women have the right to be leaders in various fields, just like men, as women are partners on the survival path. Esa (ibid) added that men alone would not be able to face all nature challenges in science, mind, and in building the human universe with all its demands.

Despite the attempts to isolate women, and despite the lack of opportunities and of recognizing their abilities, and despite the lack of opportunities to employ them in main leadership jobs and of paying them low salaries, many women, especially in the Western society, have made their way to pioneering roles and have led into societal changes in various life domains (Kelenke, 2011).

In developing countries the phenomenon of asymmetrical representation is more widespread and more extensive on all levels. Oplatka (2006) emphasized that women in developing countries face numerous challenges on their way to employing a leadership position at schools, and these challenges are inner, psychological, and outer, namely societal.

Speaking about women in the Arab world, Zuhur (2003) noted the inner obstacles that women face and that include their duties toward their home and family, and the outer obstacles that are related to their work in the community. In the Arab Palestinian community within the green line Arab women have exceeded their marginal role and have made their way to higher education; the rate of female college graduates was higher than that of male college graduates. In 2009, Arab female students at Israeli universities constituted 61% of all Arab students (Arar & Haj-Yehia, 2010). Moreover, females constituted 75% of teachers in 2007 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2008). However, women still face challenges in obtaining leadership posts in education (Addi-Racah, 2006; Arar & Abu-Rabia-Queder, 2011) in spite of the noticeable successes Arab women have made in this field. In 2001 the rate of Arab female principals reached 18.9% at elementary schools and 7.9% at junior high and high schools (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2005). In 2007, this rate reached 28% at elementary schools and doubled at junior high and high schools (Israeli Ministry of Education Information Center, personal communication, May 20, 2008). This rate of female principals, though, is still humble in comparison to that in the United States of America. For example, in 2003, the rate of female principals was 56% at elementary schools, and 26% at high schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). In the United Kingdom, this rate reached 75% at elementary schools and 32% at high schools (ASCL, 2011), which confirms the existence of obstacles and challenges Arab women face on their way to school management (Shapira, Arar & Azaize, 2011), as their representation in these posts is disproportionate to their percentage in population and in education.

The Study Problem and Questions

Few studies have investigated the hardships and obstacles that female principals face in the Arab community within the green line on their way to leading schools. Some of these studies are qualitative that explored the price a female principal pays on her way to reaching the post of a principal (Arar, 2010; Shapira, Arar, & Azaize, 2010) and others compared the feminine leadership methods both in the Arab and in the Jewish sectors (Addi-Racah, 2006). Also Shapira (2006) tracked the empowerment that higher education has effected for women in the community. There is a wide range of leadership studies; some investigated the social role and the relationship between the leader and followers and explored the personal traits of leaders. These studies also attempted to know the role of the leader, his or her traits and characteristics through

the followers (Arar, 2010). However, a gap still exists about the obstacles a female principal faces on her aspiration path for educational leadership especially among Arabs in Israel (Shapira, 2006). This gap has not received sufficient study and investigation (Arar & Abu-Rabia-Queder, 2011). Moreover, most of the previous studies used qualitative research and case studies and did not represent Arabs from Israel.

Based on the aforementioned, and due to the research gap in the subject investigated, the researcher of the current study attempted to reveal the gaps and challenges that an Arab female principal faces on her way to leading a school from the perspective of teachers. The researcher also attempted to reveal how the Arab female principal deals with these challenges and the attitudes of teachers toward the leadership of Arab schools by a female principal. In addition, the researcher investigated the qualitative value of the female principal as an educational leader.

Specifically, the current study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do female principals in the Arab sector practice the leadership role from the perspective of teachers?
2. Are there statistically significant differences between the means of the level of practicing the leadership role by female principals at Arab schools from the perspective of teachers according to the study variables: gender, education level, years of experience, age, qualifications, place of residence, and number of students?
3. From the perspective of teachers, what are the obstacles in practicing the leadership role by female principals within the green line?
4. Are there statistically significant differences between the means of obstacles in practicing leadership roles by female principals in the Arab sector from the perspective of teachers depending on the study variables: Gender, education level, years of experience, age, qualifications, place of residence, and number of students?

The Importance of the Study

The importance of the study stems from the fact that it investigates the condition of the leadership role of female principals in the Arab sector from the perspective of school teachers. In addition, the current study is important because it combines descriptive statistical research with qualitative research. Moreover, the present study provides comprehensive and current information about the Arab sector, especially about female principals in their leadership role. The study also sheds light on both obstacles that female principals face in fulfilling their leadership role and on the ways they use to overcome these obstacles. Besides, the study presents a clear vision of methods that can develop the leadership role of female principals in educational institutions from the perspective of feminine leaders. Such a vision can benefit decision makers in the Arab sector and can draw the attention of relevant entities to the importance of having women in high managerial posts and to the qualitative change they can effect at Arab schools. Finally, the study will expand the knowledge about the leadership role of female principals at educational institutions.

Literature Review

Scholars and those who work in educational management attempt to clarify the difference between management and leadership. Some of them think that educational management is all that is related to the executive side that provides proper conditions and human and financial resources to the educational process. Leadership, however, relates to something more extensive and requires who practices it to realize the long term goals and objectives, and he or she, thus, will be responsible for the executive parts and will have to combine both leadership and management (Al-Ajami, 2008).

Knuth and Banks (2006) stress that management and leadership are two terms in two different levels; whereas management describes the principal job officially, leadership describes the dynamics and motivation of the relationship between the principal and his or her staff through the management process.

Leadership is defined as “the ability of a person to influence others in a way that makes them accept his or her leadership voluntarily, and without legal commitment; due to their spontaneous recognition of the leader’s values, goals, his or her custody over their hopes and ambitions, and this provides him or her with the opportunity to lead them collectively as he or she wishes (Kandeel, 2010). Obeidat (2007) defined leadership as the activity a person practices to influence people and to make them cooperate to achieve a goal that they desire to achieve.

One can conclude from the aforementioned that an educational leader cannot work on his or her own and in seclusion from others. This requires him or her to possess a great skill and power to influence others and to gain their trust through persuasion and dissuasion. A leader also needs to understand the capabilities, preparedness, and needs of each one of the individuals who work with him. Additionally, a leader needs to accept the emotions of those who work with him or her and needs to identify with their hopes, pains, and ambitions. Besides, a leader needs to listen to his or her followers’ complaints and needs to advance their work regardless of its size. When the leader gains the satisfaction and acceptance of his or her followers, he or she will bring improvements, renovations, changes, and continuous creativity to school.

One of the viewpoints about the difference between management and leadership states that both the manager and leader are ideally leaders. However, leaders do not necessarily need to possess the capabilities and skills that are necessary for active managers (Robbins & Coulter, 2002).

Some researchers contend that leadership and the role of the leader complement each other and through these roles one can predict an individual’s behavior in various situations. They also contend that in management the official roles of employees are determined by their names and jobs. All these roles, however, are related to the expectations of employers and employees and others, and many of these roles can be learned through observation, imitation, and modeling (Al-Badri, 2002).

There is a collection of leadership roles that many researchers enumerated and that a successful manager has to follow in order to be a distinguished and creative managerial leader and in order to achieve that goals that serve the institution and

the employees. These roles, as mentioned by Siebner (1998), represent the roles that a leader has to fulfill and that he or she manages the institution according to them. These roles are: forming the general vision, supporting the institution's concepts and values, encouraging those who excel, and adopting activities.

The educational leader possesses special traits that enable him or her to cope with all these roles. The most salient traits an education leader has are: Capability and qualifications, verbal fluency, flexibility, originality, ability to understand problem solving, having good health, appropriate looks and good body shape (Attawi, 2004).

Successful leader bases his or her work on democracy and cooperation in decision making, strives to effect changes, improvements, and renovation. A successful leader also has the ability to motivate those who work with him or her to perform their jobs perfectly and helps them achieve satisfaction from work, which results in collective work spirit (Jreisat, 1996).

Leadership among Women

Over the last years, dispute arose about women assuming leadership in many Western countries. Many studies and books indicated that there is a significant decrease in the representation rate of women in high leadership posts at schools during the 70s and 80s of the last century in many Western countries including the United Kingdom and the United States of America. There is a low representation of women in high educational leadership posts and at the level of managing high schools, and this reality is in odds with the fact that there are many women who work in teaching (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Lad, 2002).

There are many factors that may influence the expectations of female leaders about success in their job. Previous studies suggested that factors such as gender, family, and job related factors may strongly influence the promotion of female leaders at work. There is evidence that sexism exists at work place. Various viewpoints explained the reasons that women do not advance at work as men (Powell, 2000).

There is a viewpoint that states that culturally women grow to adopt specific traits and behaviors that help them practice assumed roles such as their commitment toward house responsibilities and leave managerial posts to be filled by men (Cleveland et al., 2000). Some women, though, realize that their feminine characteristics are important and beneficial for their success in management (Aycan, 2004).

Many studies emphasized that combining house duties and responsibilities toward the family on the one hand and responsibilities toward the job, on the other hand, may hinder advancement at work for women. Studies in the Western society indicated that women have to make tough decisions such as to stay single, or without children if compared to their counterparts who are often married and have children (Powell & Graves, 2003). Other studies indicated that the possibility for women to participate and advance in their jobs depends on their tendency to play multiple roles such as a wife, a mother, and an employee, and these situations have not been studied in detail in the Arab society (Jawad, 1998).

Previous studies dealt with general management and discussed the obstacles that female employees face and the discrimination against women to reach managerial posts. Some researchers attempted to specify and to categorize some obstacles that women face when they endeavor to take various managerial posts at schools. For example, Hall (1996) from England, Shakeshaft (1989) from the USA, and Balckmore (1993) from Australia offered various explanations for the decline in the number of women in leadership posts in education. One of the main explanations is that the male traits of male principals contribute to increasing leadership effectiveness among men, and that the female traits of female principals contribute to ineffective leadership.

Shakeshaft (1989) indicated many explanations for the underrepresentation of women in managerial posts. She stated that in addition to the obstacles that females face when applying for jobs, those who apply for leadership jobs face discrimination that is based on gender and that stems from social norms that portray women as a victim of institutional practices that forbid new groups. In addition, women themselves compete for distinction, and this consequently limits their advancement.

Cubillo and Brown (2003) contend that women do not have professional ambitions that are necessary for assuming managerial posts. Additionally, they contend that women do not have sufficient knowledge about the promotion procedures in the educational system and that women lack self-competence in general, and this leads to a decrease in the number of female applicants for leadership jobs when vacancies in these jobs arise. Other studies such as that of Limerick and Anderson (1999) stressed that there are inner obstacles that explain the underrepresentation of women in leadership at schools. These inner obstacles include social upbringing that is based on individual differences between males and females, fear from failure, low level of competitiveness, low self-esteem, insufficient professional development, and the limited variety of jobs available for women.

In her earlier study Blakmore (1998) argued three types of obstacles that all prospective female principals faced, and these are: Socio-political obstacles, system's obstacles, and personal obstacles. The personal obstacles refer to lack of self-confidence, which women develop as a result of the male cultural control that appears in the sociopolitical obstacles and in the system's obstacles. Therefore, when applying for school management jobs, women suffer from gender discrimination beside ordinary obstacles that male applicants face, too (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). Also, Coleman (2002) stated that the support of the mother and the encouragement of the father for helping women succeed in Western countries help successful female principals overcome this type of obstacles.

In developing countries, this issue is still marginal because these countries still give men more privileges than women. In these countries, men or fathers still play a central role in the family and society and they mostly assume teaching and school management jobs (Arar, 2008). Some researchers believe that males and females follow different leadership styles. Whereas women follow the cooperative democratic leadership style, men follow the autocratic leadership style. It seems that women tend to work in a way that it based on friendship through involving all the relevant individuals in decision

making. Regan and Brooks (1995) refer to this leadership style as relational leadership, which is “leadership that relies on the relations between the leader and the followers.” Fennel (1999) conducted four case studies about female principals of four schools in the area of Las Vegas, USA. The findings of the study revealed what was mentioned before, that female principals who participated in the study tended to use the cooperative democratic leadership style. Studies confirmed that men and women follow different styles in managing institutions and those women tolerate more than men the leadership styles that are democratic and self-directed. These studies mentioned also that the procedural and transitional leadership styles may be related to gender, as male leaders are more procedural than women, and female leaders are more transitional than males (Eagly et al., 2003; Embry et al., 2008).

In a study about women in the Arab education system in Israel, it was found that the gender has an essential role when women serve as principals and that when women enter managerial posts that offers a different managerial style that contributes to the development and advancement in many fields in the Arab society in Israel (Shapira, 2006).

Women usually focus on relations with other and their main and essential concern is education. Women also have a democratic style, as they participate more in decision making and they feel it is necessary to find a societal sense (Grogen & Shakeshaft, 2011; Shakeshaft, 1989). On the contrary, other researchers found less support to gender differences in general management and in school management. Literature about general management pointed out similarities between male and female leaders (Klenka, 2011). Since leadership roles “fit” men, women have to avoid attempting to achieve these roles or to risk suffering from cultural punishment, such as less marriage opportunities (Cubillo & Brown, 2003). Despite the increase in the rate of female teachers who strive to achieve a higher degree in education and who overcome male categories in desired posts, men are still preferred for management at schools (Shapira, 2006). With struggle, few women were appointed as school principals, and these women are considered exceptional. The agreed upon rule is that a school principal job is suitable for men (Shapira, Arar & Azaize, 2011). The social status of Arab women influences their educational achievements and their profession, as the husband’s attitude toward the wife’s work outside home and her roles as a mother and as a house-wife determine their relationship and the psychological wellbeing between them (Abu Baker, 2002). Abu Baker (2008) argues that many women gave up advancement in their jobs when they got married and especially when they gave birth to children and the extended family began to need them. The Arab society might have changed their attitude toward hiring women, but not toward the husband help at house work, as the wife is committed first and foremost to tend her home and children, and in many times at the expense of their job and advancement at their job. Consequently, Arab women suffer, in general, and female academics, in specific, from dual discrimination as they are part of an oppressed minority, whose opportunity to reach work market is limited, and this work market is controlled by the Jewish majority. Additionally, Arab women are part of a patriarchal society, which gives priority to men, who face discrimination (Arar & Mustafa, 2011).

The obstacles that women face in leadership are divided into organizational, personal, social, and financial obstacles. The obstacles that hinder women from reaching leadership posts can be classified into obstacles that are related to women themselves, obstacles that are related to men and to the work environment, and obstacles that are related to the politics of society.

Women in the Western society combine care and empathy in their feminine leadership style (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). This is the opposite of the situation in the Arab society. Arab women in Israel face many cultural obstacles on their way to becoming principals, similar to those obstacles that women from other developing countries face when they aspire to become principals (Fitzgerald, 2010).

The women center for educational Leadership in the Jewish and Arab sectors is considered an important body that clarifies the differences between the two societies. The Arab minority within the Green Line are Palestinians who stayed on their lands after 1948 even though many Palestinians fled to neighboring Arab countries and became refugees. This minority witnesses strong differences in many dimensions; they differ ideologically, in residence area, religion, and in family (Torty, 2008). Since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the Arab educational system for the remaining Palestinian minority was formed according to the political and security standards of the military rule that was imposed on this minority until 1966 (Abu Sa’ad, 2011).

Since the establishment of the state of Israel, the Arab educational system was a tool in the hands of the Jewish majority to control the Arab Palestinian minority in Israel; this control was reflected in the educational goals and contents and in the organizational structure of the whole educational system (Abu Asbeh, 2006a). Besides the discrimination, that was mentioned earlier in this paper, the Arab educational system suffers from inner domineering by the Arab citizens themselves; the relationship between the teacher and the student is one of suppression, and the relationship between the teachers is based on regional nondemocratic inequality, and the teaching methods are mainly lecturing (Al-Haj, 1996).

Previous Studies

The previous studies seem to have addressed the subject from various viewpoints. From the findings of the previous studies, the researcher has concluded the following: Some studies addressed the obstacles to practicing leadership roles by female principals such as Bilbisi (2007) and Al-Zuheiri (2006). Other studies addressed the obstacles that hinder women from reaching leadership roles such as Khasawnah (1992), College of General Management and Princess Basma’s Center for Women (1998), Shukum (1999), Audi (2002), Al-Rashid and Abu Dalleh (2002), Al-Hussein (2004), Tlaisi and Kawthar (2011), Shapira (2006), Jahshan and Nawa (2007), Shapira, Arar and Azaize (2010), Queder and Oplatka (2008), Lesslie (1998), Stephens and McClure (1997), Shapira and Arar (2012), Doren, Rouke and Papalewis (2003), Ononiwn (2001), Brunner (2000), Berman (1999), Addi-Racah (2005), Oplatka (2006), and Barkol and Kafaborger (2006).

Al-Bashabisha (2006) and Nassar (2002) studied factors that help women reach leadership posts and the extent to which they practiced creative skills. Participants in the previous studies held different jobs; they were teachers, principals, directors, and assistant principals. The previous studies yielded different results.

The previous studies benefitted the researcher greatly; they enabled her to form a clear vision of the research question. The research methods, procedures, and results of previous researchers assisted the researcher in the present study to form the research problem and questions. Additionally, previous studies helped the researcher choose the methodology and procedures for the present study, and they served as the main resource for a great amount of important information. Besides, previous studies directed the researcher to other appropriate resources and studies and helped her form comprehensive perception about the theoretical issues that the present study should include.

The previous studies were pioneer in nature, used qualitative research methods, utilized non-representative samples, and did not specify the causes from the perspective of teachers. Learning about viewpoints of teachers can reveal their ambitions and aspirations toward leadership roles at Arab schools.

None of the previous studies has conducted research in Arabic on the leadership role of women in the Arab sector within the Green Line. In addition, none of the previous studies was conducted solely by Arab researchers; they were conducted either jointly by Arab and Jewish researchers or by Jewish researchers. Moreover, all the studies conducted within the Green Line were either totally qualitative or investigated the phenomenon utilizing personal interviews, or totally quantitative except for Shapira's (2006) study. The present study, however, investigates the leadership role through exploring the attitudes of leaders, on the one hand, and the attitudes of followers, on the other hand. Besides, the present study combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods while showing the overlap between the opinions of leaders and followers. This justifies conducting the present study for exploring the reality of leading schools by female principals.

The present study is considered a continuation for the field of female leadership and the researcher hopes that it will contribute to this field. This study is distinguished from previous studies in that it addressed the attitudes of teachers toward women practicing leadership. Additionally, the present study addressed the future vision for developing the leadership skills of women; it attempts to investigate the leadership role of female principals in the Arab sector from the perspective of teachers, obstacles, and ways to develop this role. What makes this study stand out is that it addresses an important issue, involving women in educational leadership in the Arab sector, which is in great need of such studies.

Methodology Participants

The sample of the study consisted of principals and teachers from 210 schools from the Arab sector within the Green Line in the school year of 2011-2012. The study consisted of 12 female principals of elementary, middle, and high schools from all Arab regions in the state. The participants also included 210 teachers, both males and females. The study was a stratified sample upon two stages and random. The first stratified variable was the type of locality, and the second stratified variable was the level of schooling. An alpha level of .05 was used in the study.

The study instruments were distributed to participants following their consent to participate in the study. Table 1 demonstrates the independent variables of the teachers who participated in the study.

Table 1:-Distribution of Participants according to Study Variables

Variable	Levels of Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	164	40.8
	Female	238	59.2
Level of Schooling	Elementary	179	44.5
	Middle	94	23.4
	High	129	32.1
Years of Experience	Less than 10 years	128	31.8
	10 years or more	274	68.2
Age	until 30	78	19.4
	31-40	204	50.7
	41-50	86	21.4
	51 and above	34	8.5
Qualifications	Senior Teacher	24	6.0
	B.A.	278	69.2
	M.A. or Ph.D.	100	24.9
Type of Locality	Town	293	72.9
	Village	94	23.4
	Mixed	15	3.7
Number of Students	small/ up to 200 students	42	10.4
	medium/ 200-500 students	171	42.5
	Large/ above 500 students	189	47.0
Total		402	100.0

The researcher interviewed 12 female principals of elementary, middle, and high schools from all regions in the Arab sector in a non-random way. The researcher recruited this sample through the snowball sampling method, as she started with a certain number of female principals from the Arab sector.

Instruments First Instrument

The final instrument of the study is a questionnaire that the researcher developed specifically for the present study. The questionnaire is divided into three parts as follows:

Part One

It includes information about many variables that are related to teachers and these are:

1. Gender (male, female)
2. Level of schooling (elementary, middle, high school)
3. Years of experience (less than 10 years, 10 years and above)

4. Type of school (public, private)
5. Qualifications (Senior Teacher, B.A., M.A., and Ph.D.)
6. Type of locality (town, village, mixed)
7. Number of school students (small: up to 200 students, medium: 200-500 students, large: more than 500 students)

Part Two

This part includes the extent to which female principals practice the leadership role from the perspective of teachers. This part was amended and developed by the researcher to suit the present study. It consists of 55 items of about seven fields: Decision making, communication and relationships with others, information, organization and management, future vision, change, and organizational education.

Part Three

This part includes the obstacles that female principals face in practicing their leadership role from the perspective of teachers. This part consists of 23 paragraphs about four fields: Managerial obstacles (outer), societal obstacles, psychological obstacles (inner), and home-related obstacles.

Content Validity of First Instrument

To verify the content validity of the study instrument, it was presented to eight judges who were experienced and specialized in educational management and in leadership. The judges are researchers from Jordanian universities who study the Arab sector.

Construct Validity of First Instrument

The first instrument of the study was administered to a pioneer group that consisted of 30 teachers that were not included in the final study sample.

Stability over Time of First Instrument

To assess the stability of the first instrument, its test-retest reliability was examined; it was administered to a pioneer group of 30 teachers twice within a two-week interval.

Qualitative Interview

The researcher developed the second study instrument, interview, for enriching the study. The researcher followed the standardized interview style, where interviews are conducted individually and are based on narration and autobiography of each female principal who participated in the study. The researcher prepared various questions that aim at identifying obstacles and ways of improvement.

Stability of Second Instrument

The researcher and her colleague interviewed three female principals as a pioneer sample. These three principals did not participate in the main study. The researcher's colleague was skilled and qualified in administering interviews and in analyzing their content.

The Study Variables

The study included two types of variables: Independent variables that are related to the teachers and dependent variables.

Independent Variables

1. Gender (male and female)
2. Level of schooling (elementary, middle, and high school)
3. Years of experience (Less than 10 years, 10 years and above)
4. Age (until 30, 31-40, 41-50, 51 and above)
5. Qualifications (Senior Teacher, B.A., M.A., and Ph.D.)
6. Type of locality (town, village, mixed)
7. Number of school students (small: up to 200 students, medium: 200-500 students, large: more than 500 students)

Dependent Variables

1. The extent to which female principals practice the leadership role and its domains in the Arab sector from the perspective of teachers
2. The extent of hindrance in the practice of the leadership role and its domains by female principals from the perspective of teachers

Procedures

The researcher conducted the following procedures:

1. Read through previous studies and literature
2. Developed the first study instrument based on previous studies and literature
3. Developed the second study instrument by adopting Arar's (2009) opinions
4. Verified the validity and stability of the study instruments, completed them, and obtained permission from the Ministry of Education to conduct the study at schools in the Arab sector.

5. Obtained approval from the Ministry of Education to conduct the study. Administered the first study instrument and conducted the interviews (the second study instrument).
6. Collected the questionnaires of the first study instrument and used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and other relevant statistical procedures to analyze the study's data.
7. Collected the audio-taped interviews with the female principals, transcribed them, and analyzed their content in accordance with data analysis procedures in qualitative research

Results

The goal of the present study was to explore the extent to which female principals in the Arab sector practiced the leadership role from the perspective of teachers. Additionally, the study aimed at exploring the extent of hindrance in practicing this role and ways to improve this role utilizing the following questions:

First: "To what extent do female principals in the Arab sector practice the leadership role from the perspective of teachers?" Findings indicate that the mean of practicing the leadership role by female principals in the Arab sector is 4.04 (to a great extent). The domains in which the principals practiced leadership were in the following order:

1. The domain of organization and management
2. The domain of organizational culture
3. The domain of information
4. The domain of future vision
5. The domain of communication and relationships with others
6. The domain of change
7. The domain of decision making

Second: "Are there statistically significant differences in the means of the level of practicing the leadership role by female principals in the Arab sector from the perspective of teachers, and can these differences be attributed to the various demographic variables (gender, level of schooling, years of experience, age, qualifications, type of locality, and number of students)?"

The researcher carried out post hoc *a posteriori* multiple comparisons using the Games-Howell test. The comparisons revealed that practicing the leadership role by female principals in the Arab sector from the perspective of teachers was higher at the elementary school level, and that the level of practicing that role was perceived as higher by teachers whose age was up to 30 years old and who were between 31 to 40 years old. Additionally, practicing the leadership role by female principals was perceived higher when the number of school students was medium (200-500 students).

Third: "What are the obstacles in practicing the leadership role by female principals in the Arab sector from the perspective of teachers?" The level of obstacles in practicing the leadership role by female principals in the Arab sector from the perspective of teachers in all domains was medium. The level of obstacles in the various domains was in the following order:

1. Obstacles related to home
2. Societal obstacles
3. Managerial obstacles (outer)
4. Psychological obstacles (inner)

Fourth: "Are there statistically significant differences between the means of the levels of obstacles in practicing the leadership role by female principals in the Arab sector from the perspective of teachers and that are contributed to the study variables (gender, level of schooling, years of experience, age, qualifications, type of locality, and the number of students)?" The level of obstacles in practicing the leadership role by female principals in the Arab sector from the perspective of teachers was significantly higher among teachers who had less than ten years of experience than among teachers who had ten years and above of experience.

The results also indicated a statistically significant difference in the level of obstacles in practicing the leadership role by female principals in the Arab sector from the perspective of teachers according to age and to number of students. The level of obstacles is perceived as significantly higher by teachers who are 41-50 years old, and it is higher among teachers from schools with a large number of students (500 students and more).

Additionally, results revealed that teachers from villages perceive female principals in the Arab sector as suffering more from psychological obstacles (inner) than teachers from mixed towns and from towns.

The results also showed that teachers from schools with a small number of students (up to 200) perceive female principals as having more managerial and societal obstacles in practicing their leadership role than teachers from schools with a large number of students (more than 500). Regarding inner and home-related obstacles that female principals face, teachers from schools with a large number of students perceived them as bigger than teachers from schools with a small number of students.

Results of Interview

First, the results of the first interview question "describe in a few sentences your future vision. In other words, what are the important issues that are essential to achieve in order for school to be at its best?" are as follows:

- Meeting the various and different students' needs. The school's future vision revolves around improving the students' achievements.
- School's future vision is represented in teaching students to respect others' humanity.

- School's future vision revolves around addressing the individual differences among students.
- Striving to make school a place that meets all students' needs.
- Ensuring an environment of creative work. Strengthening the democracy values among students. Securing a safe and nonviolent environment.

One of the female principals (S) stated: "My future vision for my school is addressing the individual differences, as we care about students' abilities and capabilities, and we attempt as much as we can to meet the various needs of students." Principal (Z) stated: "My future vision for my school is based on raising the students' achievements, as the main goal of school is teaching."

Second, when asked "Who determined this vision?" teachers answered that the principal and those who work with her determine the future vision.

Principal (S) indicated that she did not determine the school's future vision individually; she stated that "the [future] vision was laid out by consultation with the staff, during a workshop, as we identified the strengths and weaknesses of school and we decided to lay out the future vision for the school accordingly."

Third, when asked: "How do you view the women's leadership of schools? To what extent do you think women can lead educational institutions?" teachers answered that Arab women own great energies, just like Arab men. However, the societal circumstances and the masculine mentality of our society prevented the development and advancement of women properly. They added that women's belief in themselves helped them overcome their fear from the limits that society imposed on them and barred them from assuming leadership and managerial posts at schools and other institutions. They stated that the proof is the number of educated females and of female teachers surpasses educated males and male teachers in our society.

Fourth, when asked "What obstacles do female principals face in practicing their leadership role at school?" teachers answered that our society constitutes an obstacle in the way of women's success in leadership. The house and children's responsibilities besides school's duties are also an obstacle in the way of her success. Moreover, politics constitutes another obstacle. In addition, her fear from failure plays an important role in her giving up leadership.

The obstacles that female principals face in practicing their leadership role at school are social, cultural, political, and sexist. Socially, a female principal is viewed as a mother, a wife, a house-wife, in addition to her professional part as a principal. Socially, she cannot perfect all these tasks, especially those of a principal, as she needs to be away from home frequently and for long hours due to staff gatherings, in-service courses, and visits to the offices of the Ministry of Education.

Fifth, when asked: "In your opinion, what are the ways to overcome and challenge these obstacles?" teachers answered that "A woman needs a strong will and belief in her ability, and the individuals and environment around her should not shake her ability, in order for her to reach the management of educational institutions, in addition to her need for the home support for challenging and overcoming the obstacles and duties that she is supposed to do such as raising her children and doing housework."

Sixth, when asked the question: "Do you believe there is a relationship between male or female traits and the ability to lead a school? Explain! To what extent there is a relationship between the gender of the principal and his or her ability to lead a school?" Teachers answered that there are successful men and that there are successful women; it all depends on the person. In other words, the person's character determines his or her success or failure in management and not his or her gender."

Seventh, when asked the question: "If given a choice, with whom would you choose to work, with a male or female principal? And why?" the teachers answered that the tendency would be toward qualifications and skills rather than the gender of the principal. They added that they would be with the person who holds educational philosophy and who practices successful and real educational methods, and that there is no preference for a man or a woman unless they are equal." (A teacher quote).

Eighth, when asked the question: "What capabilities and skills does a woman need to lead an Arab school?" the teachers answered that the first thing that should characterize a female principal is humanity, when she has the patience and when she follows up the learning process. This is something essential as well as the follow-up and supervision, and feeling belonging to school. In addition, a principal should have challenge, courage, lack of fear, and [ability] to establish relationships with others and to listen to them. A principal should possess knowledge, because it constitutes strength. A principal should also be courageous and with management charisma, and she should cooperate with everybody and involve them in school issues. Besides, she should have sufficient capability for managing meetings effectively and she should be serious, assertive, and professional before her staff in order for them to reach excellence and creativity, to work as a team, and to work on resolving conflicts and problems in a creative way. She should also trust the employees and their capabilities and should encourage them to achieve and work [hard]." (A teacher quote).

Ninth, when asked the question: "Would you like to add any comment or suggestion in this regard?" the teachers answered that in the future, especially at elementary schools, the majority of those who manage educational institutions will be women, as women are more available. The first and last goal is improving schools and students, and the opposite, namely the engagement of principals in other issues would limit their ability to improve school in the desired direction." (a teacher quote) "At this period, I encourage women to assume leadership posts in order for society to change the viewpoint toward leadership women and in order for women to change the way they view themselves in the Arab society. Society is still apprehensive about the woman being a leader."

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the extent to which female principals in the Arab sector practiced the leadership role from the perspective of teachers. Additionally, the study aimed at exploring the extent of hindrance in practicing this role and ways to women principalship.

The results revealed that the level of practicing the leadership role as a whole and by its dimensions by female principals in the Arab sector was large. The researcher contributed this result to the active role that female principals in the Arab sector play in an attempt to prove their capability to lead schools in a milieu that almost refuses the leadership of women. Since Arab women have the capabilities and skills necessary for their success, they needed a chance to practice their leadership role at schools. Also the interviews confirm that female principals are highly successful leaders, as one of the female principals stated: "Arab women in general have the capability to lead any institution, including educational institutions, as Arab women achieved higher education degrees and acquired the ability to lead schools effectively." Another female principal stated: "A woman can lead any institution, educational and other, if she sets a clear goal for herself to achieve. Her aspirations for success help her. In addition, the view to a woman as a woman makes her exert more effort in order to prove herself at work and in order to prove to others that she is capable to lead effectively." Siebner (1998) supports these findings, as he contends that the leader's success stems from his or her ability to have all the employees, with no exception, form a joint vision. This is what the female principals did through preferring the cooperative democratic leadership style, as they show a tendency to work in a way that is based on camaraderie through involving others in making decisions.

The current result is similar to that of Jahshan and Nawa's (2007) study and that of Shapria, Arar, and Azaize's (2010) study.

The first domain, organization and management, received great response. This refers to the fact that female principals work continuously on implementing laws and rules that organize educational work. In addition, female principals strive to implement effective programs that aim at achieving goals that schools set for themselves. The reason female leaders delegate authority to coworkers might be for facilitating work and for adding an environment of responsibility. This supports literature that indicates that female principals' strive for success has formed a leadership style for them that is characterized by thought and that is directed toward solving work related problems and toward correcting communication paths with school employees (Kurland, 2006).

The results of the second interview question confirmed the interpretation of the previous question's results. It turned out that female principals do not lay out their educational institution's vision individually; they form it through consultation with coworkers at school. One of the female principals stated: "The female principal guides school employees and listens to them and saves their opinions in order to adopt a comprehensive vision that originates from all the school's employees." Another female principal stated: "My school's vision was determined cooperatively between me and my staff, because I always believe in joint work." This is consistent with the study of Hawamdeh (2003).

The second domain, the organizational education, received great response. This result refers to the female principals' great concern about getting their schools to a distinguished level besides their concern about utilizing the closeness and maintaining it at different venues and occasions, as this has many benefits for the school employees; the employees initiate to offer advice and guidance or to ask for what they need without fear.

This also makes them feel that the institution's success is their personal success. The researcher thinks that utilizing closeness and maintaining it help her create an effective environment of achievement. Therefore, the division of labor by female principals and the distribution of roles at their schools while determining everyone's authorities has brought order to their schools (Al-Ruwaili, 2003). This interpretation also confirms Ferguson's

(2007) opinion. The results of the interview's eighth question support the researcher's interpretation. The results showed that the principal's belief in her abilities and her self-confidence help her achieve successful leadership. One of the female principals stated:

"What the Arab female leader needs the most is listening, self-confidence, exerting efforts, to be giving, and to understand the challenges of teachers, students, parents, and school employees." Another principal stated: "A successful principal cannot work individually, she has to win the trust of others and to make them cooperate with her, listen to her guidance, and love to work with her."

The domain of information received a great deal of response. The researcher attributes this to the strive of female principals to raise the qualifications of teachers through engaging them in essential training courses. Besides, female principals work on following up the work and duties of teachers such as analyzing the curriculum, determining the necessary class and out-of-class activities, in an effort to invest in the educational environment in the best way.

The interpretation of the previous domain is confirmed through the results of the eighth question. One female principal stated: "In order for a female principal to lead a school, she has to be courageous and capable of distributing authorities and responsibilities among school employees, and she has to have the ability to communicate and listen to others, to spread awareness and education inside school, to follow-up changes and to involve teachers in these changes through sending them to classes and in-service courses for renewing their information and for utilizing recent technology in teaching."

Another female principal stated: "Each institution's management needs clear goals and work has to be based on democracy and ability to make decisions and to engage workers."

The domain of future vision received the fourth place and obtained a great deal of response. The researcher attributes this result to the fact that most of the female principals in the Arab sector worked on forming their schools' future vision clearly while containing clear values that guide the workers behavior at school. The reason for that might refer to the fact that female principals take into consideration expected obstacles that may arise and, therefore, they suggest solutions for these obstacles. One of the main reasons for this result might be that female principals usually involve all the school

employees in forming the school's future vision, and this makes them feel proud of forming their own future vision, as each one of them considers the school's vision as his own vision, a vision that he created. This result is consistent with the study of Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011).

The results of the interview's first and second questions confirm the interpretation of the results of the fourth domain. The results of the first question indicated that the school's future visions focused on meeting the various and different needs of students. One of the female principals stated: "My school's future vision is addressing the individual differences, as we care about the student's abilities and possibilities, and we try our best to meet the various needs of students." Another female principal stated: "My school's vision is based on raising the students' achievements; as the main goal of school is teaching." A third female principal added: "the [future] vision was laid out by consultation with the staff, during a workshop, as we identified the strengths and weaknesses of school and we decided to lay out the future vision for the school accordingly." Literature indicates that successful leaders are those who have clear vision and who know their direction well (Ferguson, 2007).

The domain of communication and relationships with others received the fifth place and received a great deal of response. The researcher attributes this result to the fact that female principals utilize recent technology in communicating with school employees. Besides, they also ensure that their coworkers feel confident through relying on them in carrying out some tasks and following them up. The reason behind that might refer to the fact that female principals in the Arab sector accept and welcome others' opinions. Another reason yet might refer to female principals' concern about solving personal problems of their coworkers at school in an attempt to establish rapport with them and to involve them in a family-like work environment (Mustafa, 2007; Al-Ruwaili, 2003; Al-Nouri, 1999).

This supports the response to the interview's sixth question. The study results revealed that there is no relation between the principal's gender and his or her success. This indicates that not only men can succeed in forming closeness and in establishing rapport with school employees. It shows that female principals, too, are able to succeed and to establish rapport and mutual respect, and in motivating their coworkers to work hard and diligently. One of the female principals stated: "Leadership today is composed of brains and feelings." This interpretation confirms that the success of educational institutions in achieving their goals depends to a large extent on the closeness inside and outside of them, as it is important for the organizational structure of these institutions and for achieving their goals (Aiasira & Ahmad Bani, 2008). Oplatka (2005) emphasized that female principals stress the importance of listening skills and cooperation, as these are tools for maintaining managerial control. This is consistent with the studies of Al-Horani (2003), Robertson (2001), and Doren, Rouke, and Papalewis (2003).

In the domain of change, there was a great response. The researcher attributes this result to the fact that when female principals strive to prove their success on the level of schools and education, they strive for continuous professional advancement at their schools. Many female principals invest financial and human energies available at school as a whole to serve the change process at school. Moreover, the researcher contends that involving all those who are affected by the change process enriches the change process, and therefore, they view change positively. Literature indicates that one of the educational leader's roles is maintaining active relationships with his or her institution's members. Many women assumed leadership roles and lead societal changes in many life domains (Kelenke, 2011).

In the domain of decision-making, there was a great deal of response. The researcher attributes this to the fact that when female principals in the Arab sector make decisions, they base them on precise and reliable information. Research explains that women in nature see it is necessary to help those around her to perform their roles in society. Literature confirms that, as it indicates that a successful leader bases his or her job on a democracy and cooperation in making decisions, strives to effect change, developments, and renovation (Coleman, 2011), motivates his or her coworkers to do their jobs at its best, and brings them job satisfaction, and this creates a spirit of collective work (Jreisat, 1996).

The results of the second question's responses indicated significant differences in means that are attributed to the independent variables of the study: level of schooling, age, and the number of students. Teachers who work at elementary schools scored the highest. The reason may refer to the fact that teachers at elementary schools perceive female principals at elementary schools as having less tasks than principals at middle and high schools. Those who are 31-40 years old scored higher, followed by those who are up to 30 years old. The reason behind this result is that teachers who are 31-40 years old are still relatively young and have not parted for a long time from what they learned at universities. Additionally, they still have high motivation that helps them view school leadership positively. One of the female principals stated: "I view the leadership of Arab schools by a woman in a very positive light, and with great respect, and I want to say it frankly because woman leadership is more realistic and professional, and is not inferior to man's leadership, and according to my knowledge of many women leaders and women who have leadership posts (a female principal) I see these schools as very successful."

Teachers from schools with 200-500 students scored higher. This is due to the fact that this medium number of students helps teachers perceive the performance of management responsibilities as ideal. Moreover, the reason could be that teachers at elementary schools, as opposed to teachers from middle and high schools, view female principals as very skilled in the domains of communication and relationship with others, organization and management, and future vision. This is due to the nature of the process of establishing and maintaining relationships with teachers, which is easier at elementary schools, as the number of teachers is smaller, and this is reflected in the domain of organization and management. The reason that teachers who are 31-40 years old followed by teachers up to 30 years old view female principals as more qualified in the domain of change refers to the fact that middle age teachers view the change process

in a clearer way than others for two reasons. First, they are still close to academia and to current issues in education. Second, they have formed sufficient expertise in teaching and in managerial work.

The results of the third question revealed that the biggest obstacles female principals face in practicing the leadership role in the Arab sector from the perspective of teachers were as follows:

Home-related Obstacles

The reason behind this obstacle might be the early marriage of women, which prevents them from practicing their role in managing school because of the responsibilities of caring for home, husbands, and children optimally (Oplatka, 2006; Powell & Graves, 2003; Zuhur, 2003).

Moreover, the Arab man in his nature does not prefer his wife to assume leadership posts, as this brings her to touch with men. Many men believe that the best job for a woman is that of a teacher, as she comes into touch only with students and does not need to spend long time outside the home to complete her job tasks. Therefore, from the perspective of man, a female teacher balances between her job and home. The result of this question can be explained by the fact that culturally women were raised to adopt specific traits that encourage them to practice certain roles such as doing housework and leaving leadership posts to be filled by men (Cleveland et al., 2000). This result is consistent with Nassar's (2002) study where it was showed that the role conflict between the family needs and the job requirements is one of the largest obstacles a female principal faces in practicing her leadership role. This result is also in agreement with the studies of Arar and Abu Rabia (2011), Tlaisis and Kawthar (2011), Shapira, Arar, and Azaiza (2006), and Oplatka (2006).

This result was also confirmed by one of the female principals, who stated: "There are obstacles that some female principals face, and these are that a woman cannot perform many roles at home and at work, and thus she is forced to give up this post." Another female principal stressed that "It is known that since the woman is a mother, a wife, a house-wife, and a principal, with no facilitations at home, and she is required to perform all the tasks altogether, thus the obstacle lies in managing many tasks simultaneously."

Ways to overcome the family responsibilities obstacle could be through great support by the family and through sharing some of the woman responsibilities such as taking care of the children, having the husband and the family do some housework. Additionally, another way to overcome this obstacle would be to find a new trend in the Arab sector that gives men duties and roles for caring for the home.

Societal Obstacles

The researcher attributes the reason for these obstacles to the fact that men strongly refuse to be bossed by a woman, as they consider this as decreasing of their manhood. In their view, man is more capable of leadership and woman has to belong to him. The reason behind that view is that society does not encourage women to reach leadership posts and sees that a woman's main job is at home. This is reflected on women's mentality, as many of them do not have the ambition to become leaders at their schools. In the researcher's opinion, the main reason behind these obstacles is the refusal of society to accept the idea of a woman as a leader at the educational institutions, as it does not believe in her ability to face hardships and to solve problems that she might face at school or in society, and it sees that man is more capable than woman to practice the leadership role and in a better way. This interpretation supports the idea that the discrimination in treating women stems from the society's view of the woman job and from the fear of men to compete with women (Arab Human Development Report, 2005).

According to Shapira (2006), when women serve as principals, they contribute to the development and advancement of the Arab Israeli society in many life domains. It seems that this issue worsens because often women are forced to give up professional advancement and development in favor of men in order not to undermine the male controlled Arab society and not to threaten the man status (Adi-Racaah, 2006; Abu Bakir, 1998).

This result is consistent with the studies of Shukum (1999), Al-Hussain (2004); Brunner (2000), Shapira, Arar, and Azaiza (2011). One of the female principals stated:

"The doors of development, advancement, and leadership close in the face of woman in society, as woman is viewed as unqualified, and this stems from our society's male mentality and culture. Ways to overcome this obstacle are to encourage woman to think of joining in the domain of high leadership in education and to work on involving the local community in the school-related issues, such as projects, so that they can see the woman's ability to manage a school. Additionally, a female principal has to offer our society achievements in order to prove for it that a woman is capable to succeed just like a man and may be more. Thereby, she encourages other women to reach these positions and to practice their roles successfully. In order to change society's view, [we] have to start with those who work at school in a way that the whole staff at school have common culture, ideas, concepts, beliefs, and directions to work with, to spread them to society, that they are one team and can work on achieving their goals, what benefits their children in the long run regardless of whether the school leader a man or a woman, and if society realizes success and see the high achievements and excitement and cooperation, they will change their view toward woman assuming high positions.

Managerial Obstacles (Outer)

The researcher contends that the main reason of these obstacles is the fact that educational leaderships are held mostly by men, and these constitute the biggest obstacle in the face of female principals in practicing their leadership role. One of the female principals stated: "Few women reach leadership positions because of their weak selfconfidence, dissatisfaction with their performance, job requirements hardship they face, all this makes her give up these positions to men, because males set many obstacles in order to decrease the opportunities for women to assume leadership positions (Shakeshafit,

1989) (so where does quote end?). In order to overcome the outer obstacles, women must achieve the best educational expertise and must achieve the highest degrees that grant her skills and capabilities that qualify them to compete with men.

Psychological Obstacles (Inner)

The researcher contends that the cause of the psychological obstacles refers to the multiple role dilemma that the Arab woman faces, as she is a principal, a mother, a wife, and a daughter, and each role requires a great amount of effort from her. In regard to her dealing with coworkers based on her feelings, one of the principals stated: "The pressures laid on the female principal weakens her managerial assertiveness and makes her fail, and we find this apprehension within many women. Relevant educational literature confirms that inner obstacles hinder the development of Arab schools, disturb the educational leadership (Arar, 2008), and in order for women to overcome these obstacles, they have to believe in their ability to lead school and that they possess everything that men have except for the inner belief in the ability to perform the leadership tasks and responsibilities.

The results of the fourth question indicated significant differences in means regarding the obstacles that female women face in practicing their leadership role at schools in the Arab sector from the perspective of teachers. The differences were due to the study's independent variables of years of experience, age, and number of students at school.

Teachers with less than ten years of experience perceived a higher level of obstacles. The reason could be that teachers view the educational reality as ideal, as they learned about it at universities, and therefore, they see obstacles and compare them to those at ideal schools. Teachers who were 31-40 years old perceived a higher level of obstacles because they believe that leadership needs dynamics and action, and they view the obstacles that female principals face as too difficult for a woman and need a larger and a more powerful effort. Teachers viewed more obstacles at schools with a large number of students (over 500 students). The large number of students sheds an impression of stress on school as a whole.

This increases the teacher's burdens and students' problems need longer time to be solved, and the solutions might require a great effort from the management, and therefore the female principal would face a large burden.

The results show statistically significant differences in the level of obstacles a female principal faces in practicing the leadership role in the Arab sector according to the type of locality and the number of students at school. The results indicated that teachers from schools in villages rated a higher level of psychological obstacles in the way of managing a school by a female principal. This result can be attributed to that teachers who work in villages expect woman to work at home and to dedicate time for her duties as a mother and as a wife, and if she has a chance to leave the house, she needs to work as a teacher and come back home at the end of the school day to look after her house and family.

One of the female principals stated: "Many educated men told me [']you are married and you have a husband who finances home, why do you take this position, look for a job for fun, that is convenient for you, and raise your children at home, and use the small salary you are paid only for clothing, and feminine matters."

Regarding the variable of the number of students, teachers who have a small number of students at their schools (up to 200 students), followed by those who have a large number of students at their schools (more than 500), thought that the outer obstacles limit the practicing of the leadership role by female principals; schools with a small number of students lessens the opportunities of the principal to come into contact with others in the various administration and Ministry of Education offices. Teachers from schools with a large number of students (more than 500 students), followed by teachers from schools with a small number of students (up to 200 students), thought that psychological obstacles (inner) are the ones that hinder more the success in leading schools by female principals. They also thought that managing a school with more than 500 students needs a large effort and high self-confidence. They added that, women in the Arab society lack self-confidence, as she does not receive support from her environment. One of the female principals confirmed this explanation, as she stated: "Many female principals could not stand the psychological pressures and were exposed to weakness in the managerial assertiveness because of men or society, or pressures could be from home because of the lack of support on the part of the husband or family, and eventually she is forced to give up this position" (Adi-Racaah, 2006; Azaiza, 2011; Shapira, Arar, & Abu Bakir, 1998). Additionally, resident's villages do not accept the idea of having a woman as the school leader, and this stems from the composition of that community.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the present study, the researcher recommends the following:

- Raising the awareness of the chief administrators at the Ministry of Education of the importance of addressing the leadership roles of female principals, and not fearing to appoint female principals in leadership positions.
- Setting clear educational policies for appointing school principals, based on qualifications and professional experience rather than nepotism and influence, which are common in the Arab society, regardless of gender.
- Granting equal opportunities for men and women in management according to qualifications and abilities, preparedness, merit, and experience.
- Calling for more studies about the leadership role of female principals in the Arab sector and connecting them with their local context to the Arab and to the international context, especially within developing societies and minorities.
- Conducting studies that compare the leadership of schools by female principals in the Arab sector with that in the Jewish sector, in order to know the extent of success in this position in these two sectors from the perspective of teachers.

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