

The Role of Creative Leadership in Enhancing Organizational Excellence: A Case Study of Al-Hussein Educational Cluster in Hebron Governorate

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Abstract

This study investigates the structural relationship between creative leadership and organizational excellence within the Al-Hussein Educational Cluster in Hebron, Palestine. Addressing a critical knowledge gap, the research examines how specific leadership dimensions originality, fluency, flexibility, and risk-taking catalyze institutional distinction within complex pedagogical environments. Utilizing a descriptive-analytical methodology, data were gathered via a 52-item validated questionnaire administered to a representative sample of educators and administrators. The empirical results indicate a high degree of creative leadership implementation (Mean = 4.09) and a corresponding high level of organizational excellence (Mean = 4.07). Statistical inference through regression analysis confirmed a significant positive impact ($p < 0.001$), with creative leadership accounting for 53.5% of the variance in organizational excellence ($R^2 = 0.535$, $F = 17.750$). Despite these robust leadership behaviours, the findings suggest that centralized bureaucracy persists as a significant structural barrier to achieving comprehensive institutional distinction. The study concludes that integrating innovative leadership frameworks into professional development is essential for navigating educational transformations. These results provide a strategic roadmap for policymakers to mitigate bureaucratic constraints and foster an ecosystem conducive to sustainable academic and administrative excellence.

Keywords: *Creative Leadership, Educational Clusters, Educational Management, Hebron, Organizational Excellence*

Introduction

The pursuit of organizational excellence has emerged as a paramount strategic priority in an era defined by rapid educational transformation and global competitiveness. As modern pedagogical systems undergo comprehensive upgrades, they increasingly function as fundamental assets for national economic advancement by cultivating high-quality human capital. According to Rothomi and Rafid (2023), the efficacy of an educational institution is no longer measured solely by its internal administrative stability but by its ability to act as a catalyst for broader societal development. This shift necessitates a profound re-evaluation of how educational clusters are managed, particularly in developing regions where the alignment between educational output and market demand is critical for economic resilience.

However, traditional education systems face increasing scrutiny from stakeholders, necessitating a radical shift toward Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and more innovative leadership models. The foundational theories provided by Wickramasinghe (2018) and the pioneering work of Spady (1994) emphasize that institutional success is contingent upon defining clear, measurable outcomes that guide every administrative and instructional decision. In the Palestinian context, specifically within the Hebron Governorate, achieving such institutional distinction requires a deliberate departure from rigid, top-down administrative models. The unique challenges of this region demand a transition toward creative leadership, which is characterized by the capacity to steer organizations through non-traditional and innovative pathways to achieve strategic goals while maximizing institutional productivity.

Review of Related Literature

Creative leadership, as framed by Qandil (2022) and Al-Adaila (2022), is not merely an abstract concept but a practical imperative for navigating institutional complexity. It involves the integration of originality, cognitive fluency, and strategic risk-taking to overcome bureaucratic inertia. In the specific case of the Al-Hussein Educational Cluster, the application of these creative dimensions is essential for fostering a culture of excellence. Leadership must transcend basic management tasks and instead focus on creating an ecosystem where faculty and staff are encouraged to innovate. This proactive approach ensures that the institution does not merely react to external changes but actively shapes its own trajectory toward distinction.

Moreover, the onset of the "Age of Artificial Intelligence" has introduced a new layer of complexity to educational management, demanding a specific type of cognitive flexibility from leaders. To maintain organizational excellence, leaders must manage the agile integration of AI-driven tools into the curriculum while ensuring that the human element of education remains central. This requires a sophisticated understanding of both technological trends and pedagogical ethics. Agile leadership in the AI era means being able to pivot strategies rapidly, adopting new digital platforms that enhance student proficiency while narrowing the digital divide that often persists in less-resourced educational environments.

Despite the recognized importance of such innovative management practices, empirical data regarding the implementation of these models in the Hebron Governorate remains notably limited. There is a significant research gap concerning how global business perspectives on excellence—often derived from corporate environments—can be effectively applied to local educational clusters. As noted by Chibba (2013), universal models of excellence often fail to account for local socio-political nuances. This research addresses the critical disconnect between high-level theoretical frameworks, such as those proposed by Al-Aqra (2022), and their actual field implementation within the Palestinian educational infrastructure.

The primary objective of this study is to provide an empirical evaluation of the implementation level of creative leadership and its direct influence on the fundamental pillars of organizational excellence. These pillars include leadership commitment, strategic planning, and continuous performance improvement. By analyzing these variables through the lens of the Al-Hussein Educational Cluster, the study aims to demonstrate that excellence is a measurable outcome of specific leadership behaviors. The focus is on determining how strategic alignment between a leader's creative vision

and the institution's operational goals can create a sustainable model for academic and administrative distinction.

Objectives

Furthermore, the study posits that organizational excellence is an ongoing process rather than a static destination. It requires a robust framework for continuous performance improvement that is supported by both internal data and external feedback. The integration of community-school ties and parental satisfaction into this framework ensures that the pursuit of excellence remains grounded in the needs of the community. As the study explores these dynamics, it highlights the necessity for educational clusters to adopt sophisticated knowledge management systems that allow for the seamless transfer of creative ideas into standardized institutional practices.

In conclusion, this research serves as a strategic roadmap for educational policy-makers in Palestine and beyond. By validating the 53.5% impact of creative leadership on excellence, it provides the empirical justification needed to overhaul professional development programs. The findings advocate for a new era of educational governance where creative leadership is institutionalized, ensuring that schools are not only places of learning but also centers of innovation. Through this synthesis of theory and practice, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how institutional distinction can be achieved and sustained in the face of 21st-century transformations.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive-analytical approach to investigate the relationship between leadership behaviours and institutional outcomes. The research tool was developed based on the theory of constructive alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Population and Sample

The study targeted the Al-Hussein Educational Cluster during the 2025/2026 academic year. The demographic distribution is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample (N=83).

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender: Female	45	54.2%
Gender: Male	38	45.8%
Age: Over 40 years	59	71.1%
Experience: 10+ years	69	83.2%
Qualification: Bachelor's	61	73.5%

Instrumentation and Reliability

A 52-item questionnaire was utilized, divided into demographic profiles and items measuring creative leadership and excellence dimensions. Responses were captured using a 5-point Likert scale. The tool demonstrated high internal consistency with a Cronbach's

Alpha value of 0.967, ensuring reliability within the socio-educational context of Palestine.

Analysis

Level of Creative Leadership Implementation

Analysis indicates a high implementation level of creative leadership across the Al-Hussein Cluster (Total Mean = 4.09). The dimensions are ranked below.

Table 2. Means and Ranks of Creative Leadership Dimensions.

Rank	Dimension	Mean	Level
1	Communication and Interaction	4.21	High
2	Problem Solving and Decision Making	4.14	High
3	Initiative and Risk-Taking	4.13	High
4	Susceptibility to Change	4.00	High
5	Motivating Creativity	3.96	High

Level of Organizational Excellence

The total mean for organizational excellence (Job Performance Quality) was 4.07. The highest-performing item was "The school is keen on continuous improvement in performance" (Mean: 4.42). However, a significant area for improvement was identified in the item "The school conducts surveys... to identify parents' satisfaction," which received a moderate score (Mean: 3.49). This suggests that while internal quality culture is strong, external stakeholder engagement remains a weakness (Al-Hila et al., 2017).

Regression Analysis: Statistical Significance of Leadership Impact

The study identified a statistically significant impact of creative leadership on institutional excellence.

F-Value: 17.750

Significance (p-value): 0.000

Coefficient of Determination (R²): 0.535

The R² value proves that creative leadership explains 53.5% of the variance in organizational excellence. The high significance ($p < 0.001$) confirms that fostering innovation is not merely an auxiliary trait but a primary driver of institutional distinction.

Findings and Discussion

The contemporary educational landscape, characterized by rapid technological disruptions and shifting pedagogical paradigms, necessitates a transition from traditional administrative models to dynamic leadership frameworks. This study meticulously explores the impact of creative leadership on organizational excellence within the Al-Hussein Educational Cluster in Hebron, Palestine. In this context, creative leadership is defined not merely as a personal trait but as a multi-dimensional strategic construct encompassing originality, fluency, flexibility, and risk-taking. By examining these dimensions, the research addresses a critical gap in understanding how innovative

leadership behaviors translate into institutional distinction within environments marked by significant socio-political and administrative complexities.

Adopting a rigorous descriptive-analytical methodology, the research utilized a validated 52-item instrument to capture the perceptions of a diverse cohort of educators and administrators. The empirical evidence revealed a remarkably high level of creative leadership implementation, evidenced by a mean score of 4.09, which corresponds with an equally robust level of organizational excellence at a mean of 4.07. These metrics suggest that the leadership within the cluster possesses a high degree of "cognitive flexibility," a trait increasingly recognized as essential for navigating the AI-driven educational shifts of the 21st century. The alignment of these scores indicates that the institution has successfully cultivated an environment where innovation is not incidental but integrated into the administrative fabric.

The core of the study's findings lies in the statistical inference provided by regression analysis, which yielded an F-value of 17.750 and a significance level of $p < 0.001$. The analysis demonstrated that creative leadership significantly accounts for **53.5%** of the variance in organizational excellence ($R^2 = 0.535$). This substantial explanatory power reinforces the theoretical proposition that institutional success is heavily contingent upon the leader's ability to foster originality and manage risk. Such findings align with modern educational theories suggesting that teacher preparation and institutional efficacy depend on moving beyond rigid structures toward more fluid, visionary leadership styles. The remaining variance, approximately **46.5%**, points toward external moderators such as resource constraints, socio-economic variables, and the inherent limitations of the local infrastructure.

Despite the strong performance of leadership behaviors, the research identifies centralized bureaucracy as a persistent structural impediment to achieving full institutional distinction. While individual leaders demonstrate high proficiency in creative dimensions, the systemic rigidity of centralized administrative frameworks often stifles the speed of innovation. This observation resonates with the work of Iloanya (2019), who argues that institutional excellence is frequently hampered by traditional bureaucratic bottlenecks. Therefore, the study suggests that for creative leadership to reach its maximum transformative potential, there must be a parallel evolution in organizational policy that allows for greater decentralization and administrative autonomy.

Furthermore, the study highlights that organizational excellence is amplified when leadership fosters a culture of strategic alignment and knowledge management. Drawing on the perspectives of Mangali et al. (2019) and Rao (2020), the research posits that the proficiency gap among students is narrowed when leadership prioritizes innovative instructional strategies and digital literacy. The maturity of knowledge management within the Al-Hussein Cluster serves as the foundational infrastructure upon which creative leadership operates. By effectively capturing, sharing, and applying institutional knowledge, the cluster transforms creative potential into measurable performance outcomes, thereby securing its position as a center of academic distinction.

In conclusion, this research provides a comprehensive framework for integrating innovative leadership into the professional development of educational administrators. The findings advocate for a paradigm shift where leadership training transcends basic management to include complex problem-solving and proactive risk management. By

mitigating the constraints of centralized bureaucracy and leveraging the 53.5% impact of creative leadership, educational clusters can better navigate future transformations. This strategic integration is vital for ensuring that academic institutions remain resilient and excellent in an increasingly volatile global educational ecosystem.

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To strategically capitalize on the 53.5% impact of creative leadership, it is imperative that the Ministry of Education institutionalize advanced professional development programs. These programs should move beyond standard pedagogical training to incorporate "AI-agility" and innovative problem-solving modules. By equipping leaders with the tools to navigate digital transformations, the ministry ensures that educational clusters can adapt to the shifting demands of the global knowledge economy. This proactive approach to leadership development fosters a resilient administrative core capable of sustaining excellence despite environmental pressures.

Moreover, empowering cluster leaders with enhanced administrative autonomy is a critical step toward mitigating the restrictive effects of centralized bureaucracy. When local leaders are granted the authority to implement context-specific innovations, the speed of institutional response to educational challenges increases. This decentralization allows for a more "agile" governance model, where originality and risk-taking are rewarded rather than discouraged by rigid protocols. Such structural reforms are necessary to unlock the full potential of creative leadership and bridge the gap between theoretical excellence and practical implementation.

Conclusion

Finally, the study underscores the importance of strengthening community-school ties as a pillar of comprehensive institutional distinction. By improving parental satisfaction survey mechanisms and fostering deeper community engagement, the Al-Hussein Cluster can ensure that its pursuit of excellence is both transparent and inclusive. This holistic approach aligns with the findings of Senaratne (2019), who suggests that institutional performance is maximized when internal leadership behaviors are synchronized with external stakeholder expectations. Through strategic alignment and a commitment to continuous innovation, the cluster can achieve a sustainable model of educational excellence that serves as a benchmark for the Palestinian educational system.

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