

# The Leadership Role of Secondary School Principals and its Relationship to Institutional School Excellence from the Teachers' Viewpoint in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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## Abstract

The study aimed to reveal the leadership role of secondary school principals and its relationship to the level of institutional school excellence. The descriptive correlational approach was used, and the study sample consisted of (180) male and female teachers who were selected from secondary school teachers in the General Administration of Education in Najran region in the south of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the third semester of the academic year 2022/2023. Two questionnaires about the leadership role of secondary school principals and institutional school excellence were used after verifying their validity and reliability. The results indicated that the level of the leadership role of secondary school principals, from the point of view of the study sample, was medium. Also, the level of institutional school excellence in secondary schools from the point of view of the study sample was medium. In addition, the results revealed a positive, direct, and statistically significant correlation between the leadership role of secondary school principals as a whole and its domains and institutional school excellence as a whole and its domains. The study recommended the work of the Ministry of Education to develop a strategic plan for continuous improvement in strengthening the leadership role of secondary school principals and developing institutional school excellence in secondary schools to reach the global level.

**Keywords:** school principals, leadership role, institutional school excellence, secondary schools

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## 1. Introduction

The school is one of the most important institutions created by society to achieve its goals. Therefore, the school needs a leader who leads the educational process toward success and excellence. It needs a principal who is considered the person entrusted with leading all efforts and human cadres with whom he lives within the framework of his work, directing them, and conducting business in the school to achieve the desired goals (Obiweluozor, 2015). Given the importance of the school principal and his leadership role, the concept of leadership emerged in the educational and school field. Leadership represents the ability to deal with a specific situation efficiently and effectively and to influence and control others in a way that leads to achieving immediate goals. Likewise, it is the process of persuading and influencing others and following the method determined by the leader to reach the desired goals (Al-Ghamdi, 2020). A leader derives his strength from his personality, intelligence, experience, skills, vision of himself, and position (Atwi, 2014).

The leadership role of the school principal was defined as the method used by the educational leader to influence others and direct their behavior toward achieving the desired goals with the least time, effort, and costs (Al-Zoubi, 2018). Therefore, the school leadership contributes to the implementation of the educational policy with its vision, mission, goals, and objectives, and the qualification and training of human cadres in light of the rapid transformation in this era to achieve the goals of the school, the progress, and advancement of society (Al-Zoubi, 2014). The importance of the leadership role of the school principal is evident from his being the first and directly responsible for implementing plans, actions, tasks, and responsibilities that achieve the school's vision, mission, and goals, facing school problems, and developing all elements of the education process, through his outstanding leadership performance (Mohammed, Edu, & Etoh, 2020). The success of the school principal in his school leadership depends on finding accurate, rapid, effective, and logical solutions to the problems he faces in schoolwork, depending on the school's vision, mission, and development programs (Harris, 2013). A principal is distinguished by his leadership depends on implementing the tasks and responsibilities required by organizing the work environment efficiently and effectively. Therefore, the leadership role of the school principal is of great

importance in organizing matters and actions inside and outside the school and achieving the desired educational goals distinctly (Caceres, 2019). Akrivoula (2014) showed that the principals of public secondary schools in Greece exercise important participatory roles that make them creative leaders, observers, and facilitators of the teaching and learning process to a high degree. Al-Zoubi (2018) revealed that school principals are keen to exercise the leadership role to a large extent to enhance and distinguish the school work environment.

Institutional school excellence has become a system of work that enables schools to be responsible for the continuous improvement of the quality of their services and programs to take responsibility for school performance and to provide the highest possible level of best practice. The school principal is the leader responsible for achieving this (Aldaihani, 2014). Institutional school excellence is defined as excellence and creativity in the performance of the school from other competing schools by providing the most successful and best practices in its work and tasks, by forming policies that focus on its employees and society moderately to achieve its desired goals (Al-Slehat & Al-Shaqran, 2021). The goal of institutional school excellence is to achieve balanced performance levels according to predetermined levels of performance, such as the efficiency of human and material resources, the quality of workers, the quality of students, effective partnership with the community, the provision of comprehensive and integrated curricula, and the possession of school principals with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully achieve business and roles in the school (Massil, Atris, & Azazi, 2018). Institutional school excellence aims to achieve competitive superiority, the school's competitive advantage over other schools in the same region, the school's continuity, growth, and development, and its transition to the world (Quta, 2021). Institutional school excellence aims to help the school develop positive guidance, use knowledge in applying business efficiently, and work to direct the behavior of school workers towards adapting to changes to achieve the school's goals and improve its performance and outputs (Al-Slehat & Al-Shaqran, 2021).

Accordingly, the leadership role of the school principal in achieving institutional school excellence appears through the activities that are devised and organized by the school principal in cooperation with workers, students, and the local community to reach high levels of mastery of schoolwork. It also contributes to reaching distinguished outputs that achieve or exceed the desires and expectations of all beneficiaries. In addition, it shows the role of the school principal in school-institutional excellence by granting authority to employees to perform some leadership tasks, involving them in decision-making and implementation, solving problems to deal with changing environmental conditions, and encouraging them to present creative initiatives and ideas (Magableh & Al-Maliki, 2021). Khan, Ahmad, and Iqbal (2015) showed that the perceptions of school principals that improve and develop institutional school excellence are represented in their desire to support the school and create a new environment aimed at development and development. Al-Ghamdi (2020) confirmed that managing the competencies of school leaders in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia contributes to achieving institutional school excellence with a high degree. Moreover, Magableh and Al-Maliki (2021) revealed that the level of application of institutional school excellence in government schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was high. Furthermore, Al-Slehat and Al-Shaqran (2021) indicated that the level of institutional school excellence in Jordanian Arab schools was average.

Based on the foregoing, there is a dear need for the current study to fill the gaps in previous studies by investigating the leadership role of secondary school principals and its relationship to institutional school excellence.

### *1.1 Statement of the problem*

The problem of this study stemmed from the fact that schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in general, including secondary schools, tended towards the application of institutional school excellence to achieve good and appropriate outputs from the results of secondary school students and graduate students with high efficiency that fit the local and global labor market. It also relied on enhancing the outstanding performance of the workers in those schools by applying the Ministry of Education's extensive training programs that focus on following modern management and leadership practices and patterns that motivate and encourage outstanding performance in carrying out tasks and tasks to achieve comprehensive development. In addition, through the work of the researcher in the educational field over the course of twenty years in secondary schools in Najran region, he noticed that the leadership role of some school principals has a kind of shortcoming in performing tasks and tasks and proceeds according to traditional and routine methods. Institutional school excellence is almost to an acceptable degree as a result of some school principals practicing traditional leadership patterns. This notion was confirmed by Akrivoula (2014), which showed that the weakness of school principals in exercising their administrative and professional roles impedes the development of the teaching and learning process. Also, Al-Zoubi (2018) showed that school principals who fail to carry out their school roles and responsibilities may lead

to poor school outcomes. Therefore, the problem of the study emerged by answering the main question: "What is the leadership role of secondary school principals and its relationship to institutional school excellence?" and the following sub-questions:

1. What is the level of practicing the leadership role of secondary school principals from the point of view of teachers?
2. What is the level of institutional school excellence in secondary schools from the point of view of teachers?
3. Is there a statistically significant correlation at the significance level of ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the leadership role of secondary school principals and institutional school excellence from the teachers' point of view?

#### *1.2 Objectives of the study*

This study aimed to identify the leadership role of secondary school principals and the level of institutional school excellence in secondary schools from the point of view of teachers. It also examined the nature of the correlation between the leadership role of secondary school principals and institutional school excellence in secondary schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

#### *1.3 Significance of the study*

The significance of this study emerged through its topic. It focused on explaining the leadership role of secondary school principals and institutional school excellence to clarify these two concepts and to find out what could help develop the leadership role of secondary school principals and institutional school excellence to make secondary schools in Najran region more competitive advantage, and global reach. It is hoped that secondary school principals will benefit from the results of this study by providing them with feedback on the leadership role and institutional school excellence. They will help them improve their leadership practices to achieve the goals of institutional school excellence in line with global standards. In addition to the fact that the results of this study can serve as a basis for researchers in this field in the future.

#### *1.4 Delimitations of the study*

The generalization of the results of this study is determined by the leadership role of secondary school principals and its relationship to institutional school excellence. It is also limited to the opinions of (male) teachers at the secondary level in government schools of Najran region in southern Saudi Arabia in the third semester of the academic year 2022/2023.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### *2.1 The leadership role of the school principal*

The school principal is the most important influential element in the school. His leadership determines the quality of education in the school, the nature of the learning climate, the level of professionalism of teachers, the quality of their morals, and the degree of their interest in students. The leadership role of the school principal is the key to success or failure in the school and the basis for achieving the school goals (Al-Ghamdi, 2020). The school principal in his school is an educational leader who has a prominent influence on all employees and is responsible for developing their performance toward achieving the desired educational goals with an integrated work team. As for the tasks and leadership roles carried out by the school principal from the administrative and technical aspects, they are multiple and appear in building the work team and how to deal and interact with it, the human relations with the school's employees, and the school's relationship with the local community on the other hand (Al-Saud, 2013). The importance of the school principal's leadership role appears in his full supervision of the educational-learning process in the school and in achieving its goals effectively. The principal is responsible for organizing, directing, and motivating all school employees, creating all possible material, cultural, and social conditions for them, and facilitating and overcoming all difficulties to carry out their roles in the best possible way. He is responsible for making changes and developing them at the level of goals, procedures, work methods, organization, methods of communication, establishing friendly relations, and systems of values and trends to keep pace with various changes. Likewise, he is responsible for confronting school problems and has a distinctive role in implementing responsibilities, tasks, and plans to achieve the school's goals, vision, and mission. In addition, he can achieve effective communication with all school employees and take into account their needs and demands within a framework of human relations. Therefore, the role of the school principal is one of the factors affecting the success or failure of the school (Al-Azmi et al., 2019).

### *2.2 Institutional school excellence*

An outstanding organization achieves and maintains superior levels of performance that meet and exceed the needs and expectations of all stakeholders. The culture of excellence is based on a set of values and commitment to them by all employees in the organization (Bashio, 2015). Institutional school excellence is defined as “a comprehensive approach that provides a systematic vision for the school as a whole, enabling self-improvement and continuous change in all processes by the requirements of new situations and quality standards governing all activities within the school” (Aldaihani, 2014). Also, it is defined as “the set of strategies that school principals follow to reach the highest degree of school performance quality among other schools” (Al-Ghamdi, 2020). One of the most important requirements for achieving institutional school excellence is identifying the requirements and tools for modern institutional and organizational performance that lead to school excellence and the expected educational outcomes. They also include identifying mechanisms for making the necessary changes to transform the school to horizons of excellence, understanding the requirements of transformational and transactional leadership, and identifying the reasons that hinder achieving the future vision. In addition, they contain identifying the conditions and factors necessary to design a school that performs its work, tasks, and duties in a professional manner or approach and understanding the modern strategic planning model. Moreover, they enclose activating organizational performance efficiently and effectively, utilizing the energy of human resources to achieve the school’s performance goals, and designing performance cards compatible with the school’s strategic plan (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2013). One of the most prominent requirements for institutional school excellence is an integrated strategic plan that shows the school’s main directions and future outlook and provides effective and motivating leadership that seeks excellence and applies the principles and standards. It is also necessary to provide the elements that work to predict the future following the school’s vision, mission, and goals and provide a comprehensive quality system that defines the mechanisms of work, oversight, quality control, error correction, and continuous improvement. In addition, there is a need to organize the work of the school by providing work manuals and policies that govern this, and a flexible organizational structure that is adjustable and adaptable to internal and external variables and takes into account the flow of work, the flow of information, and the interconnectedness of work. Moreover, they include the availability of a human resources management system, including an evaluation mechanism and administrative succession plans (Al-Dawoud, 2020).

### **3. Methods**

The study used the descriptive survey method by using the questionnaire tool to collect and analyze data quantitatively. The study sought to identify the level of practicing the leadership role of secondary school principals and the level of institutional school excellence in secondary schools in the Najran region from the point of view of the study sample and to study the nature of the correlation between them.

#### *3.1 Study community*

The study community consisted of (4500) teachers in government secondary schools in Najran region in southern Saudi Arabia in the third semester of the academic year 2022/2023. These numbers are according to statistics issued by the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2023.

#### *3.2 Study sample*

The study sample consisted of a simple random sample of public secondary school teachers in Najran region in southern Saudi Arabia, who numbered (180) teachers in the third semester of the academic year 2022/2023. The study tool was distributed electronically using an electronic link on the (Google Drive) form to the study sample via WhatsApp in cooperation with the educational supervisors in Najran Educational Department.

#### *3.3 Study tools*

Two tools were used. A leadership role questionnaire was developed based on the tools used in previous studies, such as Akrioula (2014), Al-Zoubi (2018), and Magableh and Al-Maliki (2021), to measure the leadership role of secondary school principals. The domains of leadership roles for secondary school principals have been identified. In its final version, the tool consisted of (30) items distributed in four domains: Management of education and curriculum affairs, professional development for teachers, student affairs services, and strengthening relations between the school and the local community. To correct the tool, the criterion approved by Hamadneh and Almogbel (2023) was relied on by giving the values, respectively (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) for the degrees (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). The following scores were approved for the achievement of the study tool items and the overall score: 1.00 - 1.80 = very low, more than 1.80 - 2.60 = low, more than 2.60 - 3.40 = medium, more than 3.40 - 4.20 = high, more than 4.20 - 5.00 = very high. Also, a school

excellence questionnaire was developed to measure the level of institutional school excellence, based on the tools used in previous studies, such as Al-Ghamdi (2020), Al-Slehat and Al-Shaqran (2021), and Magableh and Al-Maliki (2021). They were used to define the items and domains of institutional school excellence. In its final version, the tool consisted of (35) items distributed in seven domains: administrative affairs, teachers' affairs, student affairs, continuous development, creativity and innovation, information technology, and social responsibility. To correct the tool, the criterion approved by Hamadneh and Almogbel (2023) was relied on by giving the values, respectively (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) for the degrees (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). The following scores were approved for the achievement of the study tool items and the overall score: 1.00 - 1.80 = very low, more than 1.80 - 2.60 = low, more than 2.60 - 3.40 = medium, more than 3.40 - 4.20 = high, more than 4.20 - 5.00 = very high.

### 3.3.1 Validity

The content validity of the study tools was verified by presenting it in its initial version to ten expert faculty members specialized in leadership and educational planning in Saudi universities. They were asked to verify the suitability of the items for the domain to which they belong and the tool as a whole. They presented their opinions in terms of deletion, modification, or addition to the items and the suitability of each tool to achieve the study objectives. In light of the expert's opinions, the required amendments were made with an agreement of 80% of the experts on the importance of amending them. The most prominent observations of the experts were the linguistic reformulation of some items to be more clear and measurable to the respondents, and thus the study tools were produced in the final version.

### 3.3.2 Reliability

The reliability of the study tools was verified in two ways. The first is by the test-retest method. They were applied to an exploratory sample consisting of (30) public secondary school teachers in Najran region in the south of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who were chosen from the study population and outside its sample, then the tools were reapplied to the same sample with a time difference of two weeks between the two applications. Then, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between the scores of the respondents in the two times of application. The second method was to calculate the reliability coefficient of internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha) on each tool. Table 1 and 2 shows the results.

Table 1. Reliability coefficients for the leadership role questionnaire tool

No.	Domain	Test-retest	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Management of education and curriculum affairs	0.80	0.83
2	Professional development for teachers	0.81	0.89
3	Student affairs services	0.77	0.72
4	Strengthening relations between the school and the local community	0.73	0.74
	Total	0.88	0.91

Table 2. Reliability coefficients for the institutional school excellence questionnaire

No.	Domain	Test-retest	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Administrative affairs	0.85	0.85
2	Teachers affairs	0.81	0.91
3	Student affairs	0.83	0.84
4	Continuous development	0.77	0.92
5	Creativity and innovation	0.78	0.86
6	Information technology	0.70	0.87
7	Social responsibility	0.71	0.86
	Total	0.93	0.89

Table 1 and 2 show that the reliability coefficients of the two study tools: the leadership role questionnaire and the institutional school excellence questionnaire using the test-retest and Cronbach's alpha methods were high and suitable for achieving the study objectives.

### 3.4 Statistical processing

To answer the questions of the study, the means and standard deviations were used to identify the level of practicing the leadership role of secondary school principals in Najran region and the level of institutional school excellence in secondary schools. Pearson's correlation coefficient was also used to show the nature of the correlation between the leadership role of secondary school principals and institutional school excellence in secondary schools.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Results of the first research question: What is the level of practicing the leadership role of secondary school principals from the point of view of teachers?

The means, standard deviations, and rank of the responses of the study sample about the level of practicing the leadership role of secondary school principals were extracted on the domains of the study tool and the tool as a whole. Table 3 depicts the results.

Table 3. Means, standard deviations, and rank for the leadership role of secondary school principals

No	Domain	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank	Degree
1	Management of education and curriculum affairs	2.82	0.70	1	Medium
2	Professional development for teachers	2.79	0.83	2	Medium
3	Student affairs services	2.77	0.71	3	Medium
4	Strengthening relations between the school and the local community	2.74	0.80	4	Medium
	Total	2.77	0.62		Medium

Table 3 shows that the total score of the study sample's responses on the level of practicing the leadership role of secondary school principals came with a mean of (2.77), a standard deviation of (0.62), and a medium level. Also, the means of the domains of the study tool "Leadership Role Questionnaire" ranged between (2.74-2.82), and all of them have average rating levels. The first domain "Management of education and curriculum affairs" came the highest with a mean of (2.82) and ranked first, followed by the second domain "Professional development for teachers" in the second place. The third domain, "Student affairs services" came in the third rank, while the fourth domain, "Strengthening relations between the school and the local community" came in the last rank with the lowest mean (2.74).

### 4.2 Results of the second research question: What is the level of institutional school excellence in secondary schools from the point of view of teachers?

The means, standard deviations, and ranks of the study sample's responses on the level of institutional school excellence in secondary schools were extracted. Table 4 presents the results.

Table 4. Means, standard deviations, and ranks of the study sample's responses to the level of institutional school excellence in secondary schools

No	Domain	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank	Degree
1	Administrative affairs	2.96	.760	1	Medium
2	Teachers affairs	2.92	.740	3	Medium
3	Student affairs	2.72	.850	7	Medium
4	Continuous development	2.75	.790	6	Medium
5	Creativity and innovation	2.85	.830	4	Medium
6	Information technology	2.81	.770	5	Medium
7	Social responsibility	2.93	.750	2	Medium
	Total	2.85	.610		Medium

In Table 4, it is shown that the total score for the level of institutional school excellence in secondary schools

was average with a mean of (2.85) and a standard deviation of (0.61). The first domain, administrative affairs, ranked first with a mean of (2.96), a standard deviation of (0.76), and a medium degree. The seventh domain of social responsibility came in second place with a mean of (2.93), a standard deviation of (0.75), and a medium degree, followed by the second field of teacher affairs with a mean of (2.92), a standard deviation of (0.74), and a medium degree. Creativity and innovation ranked fourth with a mean of (2.85), a standard deviation of (0.83), and a medium degree. The sixth domain of information technology ranked fifth with a mean of (2.81), a standard deviation of (0.77), and a medium degree. The fourth field of continuous development ranked sixth with a mean of (2.75), a standard deviation of (0.79), and a medium degree. Finally, the third field, student affairs, came in the seventh and final rank with a mean of (2.72), a standard deviation of (0.85), and a medium degree.

*4.3 Results of the third research question: Is there a statistically significant correlation at the significance level of ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the leadership role of secondary school principals and institutional school excellence from the teachers' point of view?*

To answer this question, Pearson's correlation coefficient was extracted to find the strength and direction of the relationship between the leadership role of secondary school principals and institutional school excellence in secondary schools from the teachers' point of view. Table 5 depicts the results.

Table 5. Pearson correlation coefficient between the leadership role of secondary school principals and institutional school excellence from teachers' point of view (n = 180)

Institutional school excellence									
Leadership role	Pearson correlation	Administrative affairs	Teachers affairs	Student affairs	Continuous development	Creativity and innovation	Information technology	Social responsibility	The total score for the institutional school excellence level
Management of education and curriculum affairs	correlation coefficient	.412**	.573**	.287**	.272**	.319**	.466**	.429**	.506**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Professional development for teachers	correlation coefficient	.744**	.507**	.556**	.557**	.619**	.491**	.520**	.730**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Student affairs services	correlation coefficient	.571**	.656**	.623**	.465**	.631**	.538**	.561**	.748**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Strengthening relations between the school and the local community	correlation coefficient	.413**	.443**	.512**	.383**	.298**	.656**	.586**	.604**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

The total score of leadership role	correlation coefficient	.680**	.666**	.615**	.528**	.603**	.640**	.633**	.802**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5 shows that there was a direct and statistically significant positive correlation at the level of significance (0.01) between the leadership role of secondary school principals as a whole and the institutional school excellence as a whole from the teachers' point of view. The Pearson correlation coefficient was (0.802) at the significance level of (.000), which is significant at (0.01). It was also found that there is a positive, direct, and statistically significant correlation at the significance level of (0.01) between all domains of the leadership role of secondary school principals and the domains of institutional school excellence from the point of view of teachers.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Discussion of the results of the first research question

The results showed that the total score of the study sample's responses about the level of leadership role practice among secondary school principals came at an average level. This result may be attributed to the disparity in the leadership characteristics of secondary school principals. Despite the keenness of the Ministry of Education to appoint highly qualified principals, the personal characteristics of the principal may play an important role in having the leadership role and exercising it in the educational field, inside and outside the school. Also, school principals sometimes face challenges in implementing their leadership roles as a result of compliance with the regulations, laws, and instructions issued by the Ministry of Education, which may sometimes not be consistent with their leadership vision and development goals (Al-Zoubi, 2018). In addition, secondary school principals may face some difficulties and challenges in providing procedures and facilities that create appropriate conditions for teachers, students, and the curriculum due to the large number of behavioral problems that arise from secondary school students and the characteristics of students at this stage that appear in hostility (Atwi, 2014). Moreover, this result may be due to a lack of strengthening relations with society and parents because of the preoccupation of parents with their work or the lack of capabilities of secondary schools to participate with the local community in making developmental decisions because these schools follow the policy of the Ministry in education (Al-Ghamdi, 2020).

### 5.2 Discussion of the results of the second research question

The results showed that the total score for the level of institutional school excellence in secondary schools was average. Perhaps, this result is due to the novelty of the concept of institutional school excellence and its application in the field of school administration. Also, the trend toward its application is still recent in secondary schools in Najran region. Magableh and Al-Maliki (2021) indicated that the Saudi Ministry of Education began in 2021 to implement this system to lead change in secondary schools and achieve a competitive advantage in them, which causes some principals to have incorrect attitudes and beliefs about this system and its effective role in reaching the world and competing with surrounding schools. This result agrees with that of Al-Slehat and Al-Shaqran (2021), who showed that the level of institutional school excellence in public schools in Jordan was average; however, it differs from that of Al-Ghamdi (2020), who showed that the reality of institutional school excellence in public schools in Saudi Arabia was high.

### 5.3 Discussion of the results of the third research question

The results revealed that there is a positive, direct, and statistically significant correlation at the significance level of (0.01) between the leadership role of secondary school principals as a whole and the institutional school excellence as a whole from the teachers' point of view. The Pearson correlation coefficient was (0.802) at the significance level of (.000). This relationship can be explained by the school principals' freedom from routine restrictions in the performance of tasks and administrative work contributes to the development of different aspects of dealing with school situations fluently, flexibility and originality, and finding creative and innovative solutions. This freedom, in turn, contributes to activating the school environment, improving the administrative aspects, the affairs of teachers and students, and activating technology in schoolwork in order to lead change in schools and strive towards competitiveness. Exercising the leadership role of secondary school principals optimally contributes to removing organizational restrictions and obstacles in performing work and enhancing the potential creative energy of workers, students, and the local community to develop schoolwork and the school environment, thus providing an institutionally distinct school environment.



## 6. Conclusion

The study aimed to reveal the levels of the leadership role of secondary school principals in Najran region and institutional school excellence in secondary schools in Najran region. The study also showed the nature of the correlation between leadership roles and the level of school excellence. The results showed a medium level of leadership role for secondary school principals in Najran region. The domains of the study tool came in order as follows (managing education and curriculum affairs, strengthening relations between the school and the local community, professional development for teachers, and student affairs services) with a moderate degree. In addition, the overall score for the level of institutional school excellence in secondary schools in Najran region was medium. The areas of the study tool came in successive order (administrative affairs, social responsibility, teacher affairs, creativity and innovation, information technology, and continuous development) with a moderate degree. Moreover, there is a positive, direct, and statistically significant correlation at the level of significance (0.01) between the leadership role of secondary school principals as a whole and institutional school excellence as a whole from the point of view of teachers. The researcher developed the study tools; therefore, generalizing the study results depends on accuracy in extracting their psychometric properties (validity and reliability). They also depend on the respondents' objectivity in responding to the items of the two tools. In light of the study results, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education develop a strategic plan for continuous improvement in strengthening the leadership role of secondary school principals. Institutional school excellence must also be applied in secondary schools through more efforts by educational policymakers and educational officials in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to achieve a competitive advantage. In addition, school principals should adopt the idea of nominating teachers for professional development opportunities according to their needs, and secondary school principals to adopt the idea of student and community participation in making decisions related to school development. Finally, more large-scale similar studies across different school districts and grade levels are needed.

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