



## Investigate Jordan Principals' Educational Leadership Practices: Empirical Study by Applying Rasch Model

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### Abstract:

This paper aims to explore the educational leadership practices of Jordanian principals using an empirical approach. Surveys were conducted in 250 schools selected from a larger group of 350 institutions, comprising 100 primary schools, 100 secondary schools, 25 independent schools, and 25 schools with mixed levels. The surveys were distributed to all school administrators and teaching staff in the participating schools. The study received significant participation, with 150 principals and 379 teachers providing responses. The instrument used in the study was developed based on analyses of existing literature on educational leadership models. It consists of 50 dimensions related to staff development, curriculum development, defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting positive school learning. In Jordan, school principals are widely recognized as influential educational leaders. The findings of this study reveal that Jordanian principals received high ratings for their strengths in the investigated dimensions. This can be attributed to the fact that secondary school students often have more specialized educational needs compared to primary school students. Additionally, the data analysis indicates that Jordanian principals actively fostered a school culture that promoted teacher collaboration. This study is the first of its kind in the Jordanian context, investigating Jordanian principals' educational leadership practices as an empirical study by applying the Rasch Model.

**Keywords:** *Empirical Study; Rasch Model; Jordan Principals; Educational Leadership Practices.*

## التحقيق في ممارسات القيادة التعليمية لمديري المدارس الأردنية: دراسة تجريبية من خلال تطبيق

### نموذج راش

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### ملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف ممارسات القيادة التربوية لمديري المدارس الأردنية باستخدام نهج تجريبي. أُجريت استطلاعات رأي في 250 مدرسة مختارة من بين 350 مؤسسة تعليمية، تشمل 100 مدرسة ابتدائية، و100 مدرسة ثانوية، و25 مدرسة مستقلة، و25 مدرسة مختلطة. وُزعت الاستطلاعات على جميع مديري المدارس وأعضاء هيئة التدريس في المدارس المشاركة. حظيت الدراسة بمشاركة واسعة، حيث قَدَّم 150 مدير مدرسة و379 معلمًا استجاباتهم. طُوِّرت أداة الدراسة بناءً على تحليلات للأدبيات المتوفرة حول نماذج القيادة التربوية. تتكون الأداة من 50 بُعدًا تتعلق بتطوير الكادر التعليمي، وتطوير المناهج، وتحديد رسالة المدرسة، وإدارة البرنامج التعليمي، وتعزيز التعلم المدرسي الإيجابي. في الأردن، يُعتبر مديرو المدارس قادة تربويين مؤثرين على نطاق واسع. تكشف نتائج هذه الدراسة عن حصول مديري المدارس الأردنيين على تقييمات عالية لنقاط قوتهم في الأبعاد المدروسة. ويُعزى ذلك إلى أن طلاب المرحلة الثانوية غالبًا ما يكون لديهم احتياجات تعليمية أكثر تخصصًا مقارنةً بطلاب المرحلة الابتدائية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يشير تحليل البيانات إلى أن مديري المدارس الأردنيين عززوا بفاعلية ثقافة مدرسية تشجع على تعاون المعلمين. تُعد هذه الدراسة الأولى من نوعها في السياق الأردني، حيث تبحث في ممارسات القيادة التربوية لمديري المدارس الأردنيين كدراسة تجريبية بتطبيق نموذج راش.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** دراسة تجريبية؛ أنموذج راش؛ مديرو المدارس الأردنيون؛ ممارسات القيادة التربوية.

## 1. Introduction

It is widely known that school leadership plays a huge role in student learning. It is only for classroom education (Hallinger & Leithwood, 2013). Regarding school-related leadership factors, many experts believe that principal behaviour is one of the most critical factors in school improvement. How a principal behaves can set the tone for the entire school, so it is essential to ensure that they lead in a way that supports student success (Flores & Day, 2006).

It is widely acknowledged in educational leadership and administration that the role of the principal is essential when it comes to promoting educational reform and improving the quality of education in schools. The literature has long recognised the critical impact that effective principal leadership can have on student achievement and overall school success. Principals who provide solid and visionary leadership can inspire their staff, engage their community, and foster a culture of excellence that supports the learning and growth of all students (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Seashore Louis et al., 2010; Southworth, 2002). In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the accountability of schools, especially concerning outcomes. It has led to a surge in research on educational leadership over the past few decades as educators strive to find the most effective ways to guide and support their students. Solid leadership is essential for ensuring that students receive the education they need to succeed in today's world.

Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) pointed out, there are three key areas of focus when scrutinising educational leadership: leadership practices, styles, and processes. However, it is worth noting that much of the research on this topic has been based on data from primarily Anglo-American sources. It is important to remember this when considering the broader implications of educational leadership and how it can be effectively implemented across different cultural and linguistic contexts. Jordan's education system is well-regarded for producing high levels of student achievement in international studies like TIMMS, PIRLS, and PISA. However, upon reviewing the available literature on educational leadership in Jordan, there seems to be insufficient empirical research on principalship, especially regarding principal educational leadership (Melhem & Isa, 2013).

The current research aims to explore the educational leadership practices of Jordanian principals. This quantitative study is expected to contribute to a better understanding of their approach to leading and supporting teachers in the classroom. Additionally, the findings will help to build on the existing comparative literature on educational leadership, providing valuable insights into how different countries and cultures approach this critical aspect of educational leadership (Oplatka & Arar, 2017).

### 1.1 The Educational System in Jordan is Diverse and Constantly Improving.

It is interesting to learn that Jordan has a well-structured education system. The programme includes pre-school education for two years, followed by 10 years of primary education and 2 years of either secondary academic or vocational schooling. It is good to know that scholars can attend either private or public schools. Also, the bachelor's degree duration is usually 4 years in most fields, but some fields like Dentistry, Pharmacy, and Engineering require 5 years, while Medicine takes 6 years. As for teacher education, it is part of the university system, and all teachers must obtain a bachelor's degree. Secondary teachers must also pass one year of study to obtain a Higher Diploma in Education. After completing a bachelor's program, students can pursue a Tertiary Master's 1-3 degree, which takes two years. Finally, those interested in further study can pursue a Ph.D (Abu-Hamour & Al-Hmouz, 2014; Al-Omiri et al., 2006).

According to Barber (2017), Jordan has long been recognised as one of the best-performing school systems in the world. This success is attributed to the country's unwavering efforts in developing an integrated and coherent educational system with a strong emphasis on academic achievement. The educational system's success can be attributed to two main factors. Firstly, close cooperation between policymakers, researchers, and educators is crucial. By working together, they can ensure that policies and practices are grounded in research and that educators have the support they need to implement them effectively. Secondly, selecting, training, and developing a high-quality workforce is essential. Teachers are the backbone of the educational system, and investing in their professional development is key to ensuring that every student has access to a high-quality education (Looney, 2011; Saleh et al., 2023).

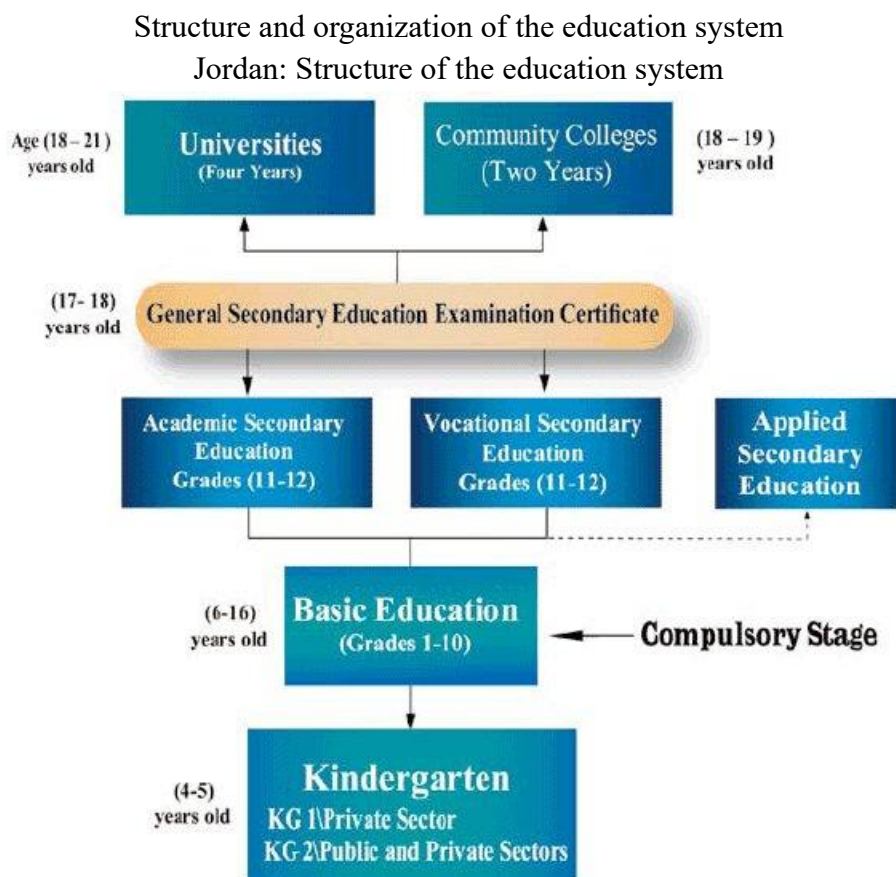


Figure 1: Structure of the Education System in Jordan (Bataineh & Montalbano, 2018)

## 1.2 Educational Leadership

Researchers have drawn several frameworks on educational leadership, illustrating the roles and responsibilities of school principals. Glickman et al. (1997) delineated the primary tasks of educational leadership into six dimensions: direct assistance to teachers, group development, staff development, professional development, curriculum development, and action research. Glickman et al. (1997) also stressed that these educational tasks should be exercised inclusively but exclusively. Andrews and Soder (1987) highlighted four broad roles of principals: resource provider, educational resource provider, communicator, and visible presence.

Hallinger and Murphy (1985) proposed a highly influential model of educational leadership with three dimensions. The first dimension is dedicated to defining the school's mission and comprises two main tasks: framing the school's goals and communicating those goals to the faculty and students. The second-dimension centers around how the educational program is managed it's all about making sure the curriculum and learning process run smoothly. School principals aren't just figureheads; they're expected to be hands-on leaders who energize, guide, and keep a close eye on teaching and learning. This part of leadership includes three key responsibilities: supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, and tracking how students are progressing. Then comes the final dimension, which shifts the focus to creating a positive and supportive school climate. It covers six important areas: making sure teaching time is protected, encouraging teachers' professional growth, staying visible and engaged, offering meaningful rewards to teachers, setting high expectations and standards, and motivating students to learn. Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model ties all this together into a solid, well-rounded framework for what effective educational leadership should look like.

As a school principal, I believe that creating a collaborative school culture and setting ambitious yet achievable expectations for both teachers and students are foundational to improving the learning experience. While Southworth (2002) model of educational leadership remains one of

the most rigorously tested and respected frameworks, more recent research, particularly the meta-analysis conducted by Robinson et al., (2008) has brought to light five key leadership dimensions, each showing different levels of impact on student achievement. These dimensions include establishing goals and expectations, strategic resourcing, planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum, promoting and participating in teacher learning and development, and ensuring an orderly and supportive environment. The effects on student outcomes range from small to large depending on the dimension, with promoting and participating in teacher learning and development having the most significant effect. It is essential to remember these factors when striving to create a successful learning environment for students.

Educational leadership is influenced by various disciplines such as sociology, psychology, political science, economics, and philosophy (Jäppinen & Taajamo, 2022). It is also shaped by the analysis of organisational systems from a sociological perspective (Male & Palaiologou, 2012). Educational leadership is analysed from different viewpoints, including administration and management, school system changes, leadership models, learning process and curriculum development, leadership in higher education, historical context, and meta-analysis (Hallinger, 2013). Educational leadership draws from various sources. One source is expanding learning and personal authority within the educational leadership process, influenced by societal changes (Astin & Astin, 2000). Another source is the analysis of organisational systems from a sociological perspective, which has shaped the concept of leadership in education (Archer, 2013). Additionally, philosophical and Islamic views provide insights into educational leadership, with philosophical leadership theories emphasising ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Islamic leadership requires honesty, trustworthiness, communicativeness, and intelligence (Dini, 2020). Furthermore, educational leadership in higher education is a subject of research, with a focus on administration, management, teaching, research, and decision-making (Abdiwali, 2021). Lastly, educational leaders are political actors who shape educational politics and policy, with power being a central aspect of educational politics and multiple sources of power existing within organisations (Agi et al., 2016).

Based on the research conducted, there are commonalities among principals regarding their roles and practices in terms of educational leadership, despite the existence of different models that have been published on the subject. Principals are expected to take an active lead in shaping the school's vision and making sure that teaching practices reflect and support that vision. Their role also involves overseeing the curriculum, supervising instruction, monitoring student progress, developing staff capacity, and creating a supportive and motivating work environment. Building on these responsibilities, this study aims to explore the leadership practices of Jordanian principals, drawing insights from prior research by (Poekert, 2016; Van Driel et al., 2001).

Focusing on a few key dimensions of educational leadership is essential for driving meaningful change in schools. These dimensions include 1) staff development, 2) curriculum development, 3) defining the school's mission, 4) managing the educational programme, and 5) promoting positive school learning. The choice of these five leadership dimensions for investigating Jordan Principals' Educational Leadership Practices is justified based on their relevance to enhancing school effectiveness and student outcomes within the Jordanian educational context and as supported by existing research and literature in the field of educational leadership:

First, Staff Development: Jordanian principals play a crucial role in fostering their teaching staff's professional growth and development (Al-Ruz & Khasawneh, 2011). Offering continuous professional development opportunities is closely aligned with national educational priorities and plays a key role in advancing teaching quality. It helps ensure that teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of diverse student populations (Leithwood et al., 2004). Second, Curriculum Development: Principals in Jordan are responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the curriculum by national standards and priorities (Khan Al-Daami & Wallace, 2007). Effective curriculum leadership means more than just managing content, it requires a clear alignment between the curriculum and the broader educational goals. It's about driving innovation in instructional practices while staying attuned to cultural relevance and sensitivity. Strong leadership in this area supports collaborative planning among teachers, uses data-



driven insights to guide curriculum decisions, and ensures that what's being taught remains coherent, purposeful, and responsive to students' real needs (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Robinson et al., 2008). Third, Defining the School's Mission: Clearly defining and effectively communicating the school's mission is fundamental to creating a shared sense of purpose and direction within the entire school community. For principals in Jordan, this means actively involving all stakeholders—teachers, students, parents, and community members—in crafting a mission that genuinely reflects local values, aspirations, and educational needs. This collaborative approach helps build a unified identity and strengthens commitment to achieving educational excellence (Fullan, 2002; Sergiovanni, 1996; Shboul, 2022). Fourth, Managing the Educational Program: Managing the educational program is a multifaceted responsibility for Jordanian principals. It involves overseeing resource allocation, scheduling, and the continuous monitoring of teaching and learning processes. Effective leadership in this area means making strategic decisions to ensure limited resources are used efficiently, instructional time is maximized, and all students have equitable access to quality education (Oplatka & Arar, 2017; Hallinger, 2011; Spillane & Sherer, 2004). Fifth, Promoting Positive School Learning: Establishing a positive learning environment is critical to fostering student engagement, motivation, and academic success. Principals in Jordan play a vital role in promoting a culture of high expectations, supporting teachers as they implement effective instructional strategies, and nurturing a safe, inclusive school climate that encourages growth and learning for every student (Marzano, 2003; Al-Omari & Sharaah, 2012).

By exploring these five key dimensions of educational leadership practiced by Jordanian principals, this study seeks to offer insights that are directly relevant and applicable to the unique context of Jordanian schools. Understanding how principals engage with these dimensions can inform efforts to strengthen educational leadership capacity, improve school performance, and ultimately enhance student outcomes in Jordan. Additionally, examining these dimensions within the Jordanian context contributes to the broader literature on educational leadership and provides valuable insights for the region's educational policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The present article sought to answer the following questions:

- (1) How are Jordanian principals perceived regarding their roles in staff development?
- (2) How are Jordanian principals perceived in their roles in curriculum development?
- (3) How are Jordanian principals perceived in defining the school's mission?
- (4) How are Jordanian principals perceived in managing the educational programme?
- (5) How are Jordanian principals perceived in promoting positive school learning?

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Sampling and Data collection**

A comprehensive study was undertaken, which involved conducting surveys across 250 schools. These schools were selected from a pool of 350 institutions, including 100 primary schools, 100 secondary schools, 25 independent schools, and 25 mixed-level schools. A random sampling technique was likely employed to select the specific schools to be included in the study and to sample the 250 schools out of 350 within each category. The randomisation ensures that each school within a category has an equal chance of being selected, reducing bias. The surveys were sent out to all school leaders and teaching staff of the participating schools. The study received an overwhelming response, with 150 principals and 379 teachers responding. Besides, teachers were sampled by inviting all teaching staff from the randomly selected schools to participate in the survey. The random selection of schools ensures that each teacher within a selected school has an equal chance of being included in the study, thereby reducing bias and increasing the generalisability of the findings. The findings of this study have been derived from analysing the responses of teachers and key personnel on their principals' educational leadership practices.

## 2.2 Instrumentation

Interestingly, the instrument was developed based on analyses of educational leadership models from the existing literature. The literature indicated that there are five broad dimensions of educational leadership. The instrument consists of 50 items relating to these five dimensions. Respondents were asked to choose one of the following responses in the survey: 1= Strongly disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Neutral; 4= Agree; or 5= Strongly agree. It is worth mentioning that before the survey administration, feedback on the clarity of the items in the instrument was solicited from 12 academics teaching management and leadership courses at the MoE. Based on the feedback from the group, minor textual changes were made to the instrument.

As mentioned above, the key variables under investigation were:

### 1) Staff Development

Staff development is a critical process that helps individuals and organisations improve their knowledge, competencies, and skills. In Jordan, staff development requires a strategic and professional approach to attract and retain staff members with the requisite skills. The success of any educational institution depends on the effectiveness and efficiency of its staff (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017). The role of staff is to possess relevant knowledge, skills, and competencies, which are crucial for the institution's success (Ritter & Gemünden, 2003).

### 2) Curriculum Development

In Jordan, the process of improving the curriculum involves several approaches. The most common methods include analysing the needs and tasks, designing objectives, selecting appropriate teaching and assessment methods, forming committees for implementation and evaluation, and reviewing the curriculum regularly (Penuel et al., 2014). The goal is to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of students and provides them with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed (Darling-Hammond et al., 1983).

### 3) Defining the School's Mission

Our school's mission statement is a heartfelt reflection of our purpose and values. Every word in our statement serves a purpose and contributes to our vision. Our mission statement embodies why our school exists and what we aim to achieve as a learning community in Jordan (MacBeath, 2005).

### 4) Managing the Educational Programme

It is critical to take an active role in managing the educational programme. It means being fully engaged in stimulating, supervising, guiding, and monitoring teaching and learning to ensure the best outcomes for students. It takes expertise and commitment to get "neck-deep" in the school's education and curriculum, but it is essential to ensure that students receive the education they deserve (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003; Hallinger, 2005).

### 5) Promoting Positive School Learning

In Jordan, having a positive learning environment takes much more than having a classroom with positive posters on the wall, although that is one of the many strategies that can be used! It means truly understanding and supporting the needs of students and colleagues in multiple ways. For example, establishing classroom rules will help set the tone for a healthy learning environment where students know what is expected of them. That structure will help students feel safe, understand their needs, and promote positive well-being (Ainscow, 2002; Mendler, 2009).

## 2.3 Data Analysis

Data were analysed in Winsteps, employing the rating scale Rasch model. This widely-used measurement approach helps model the relationship between item difficulty, personability, and the probability of a given response. Doing this allows us to examine the dimensionality of latent constructs, establish equal interval units to quantify these constructs, and assemble calibrated 'item banks.' These banks are collections of assessment items demonstrated to measure a single construct and calibrated to a common scale. When these item banks are well-constructed, they provide effective measurement along the entire continuum of the attribute of interest and allow for dynamic assessments using subsets of items targeted to the respondent's ability level. It is a handy tool; we could use it in our analysis (Linacre & Wright, 2000).

When analysing raw scores, converting them into linear measures is crucial to reflect their true values accurately. To ensure that educational leadership items are accurately calibrated, it is necessary to first clean the data by removing any items or individuals that do not fit well with the rest. It may include respondents who should have taken the rating scales seriously or educational leadership items that needed to be clarified or clarified to them. By taking these steps, we can ensure that our analysis is as accurate and reliable as possible (Fatima et al., 2017; Rahm & Do, 2000).

After a thorough analysis, we looked at the fit statistics of the items and persons, including infit and outfit mean squares, z-standardised infit and outfit mean squares, and residuals. We found that any persons or items with z-standardised infit and outfit mean squares greater than 3 and large residuals were considered misfitting and subsequently removed. Fortunately, no misfitting items were identified in our analysis. Consequently, we obtained the final person measures expressed in logits, offering an interval-level measurement within the framework of a single, homogeneous test. These measures accurately capture everyone's perception of educational leadership (Boone et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2008).

## 2.4 Reading Wright Maps

The article provides a concise explanation of how to interpret Wright maps, which visually display the relationship between persons and items in Rasch analysis. These maps are a crucial part of the analysis process because they help reveal patterns and trends within the data. By mastering the interpretation of Wright maps, researchers can uncover valuable insights about the connections between variables, ultimately enhancing the quality and depth of their research. In short, the Wright map is an indispensable tool for anyone working with Rasch analysis, making it essential to understand both how to use and interpret it effectively (Briggs, 2019).

Based on the provided data, the distribution of principals and staff development items is represented on an interval scale measured in logits. On the Wright map, principals are positioned to the left of the central vertical line, while the ten items related to the staff development dimension appear on the right. The items are ranked according to their difficulty level, with the easiest-to-endorse items at the bottom and the most challenging ones at the top. The ranking of persons is based on their likelihood to agree with or endorse each item. If a person is positioned at the same spot as an item, there is a 50% chance that they will agree with that item. According to the data presented by Winsteps, each '#' represents 15 individuals, and each '.' represents less than 15 individuals. The mean is denoted by 'M,' one standard deviation away from the mean is denoted by 'S,' and two standard deviations away from the mean are denoted by 'T.'

## 3. Results

The findings of the analysis of Wright maps have been organised into five main dimensions. Each dimension has revealed significant and unique insights into the data. The five main findings are as follows:

### Finding 1: Perceptions of Principals' Staff Development.

Figure 2 and Figure 3 clearly illustrate the Person-Item-Map that presents the relationship between examinees' ability and item difficulty levels. The map provided valuable information, with the mean value of examinees' ability (M) on the left and the mean value of item difficulty (M) on the right. It was evident that the scale items were well-distributed around the mean examinees' ability value, indicating the representativeness of the scale items. Additionally, the items matched the individuals who indicated that the scale targeted this group of students, further strengthening the validity of the assessment. The figures illustrate that most staff developments endorsed items 1, 2, 3, 6, and 9 as difficult and are ranked above the mean of the item side, while items 12, 18, 19, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 10 are ranked below the mean of the same side. Besides, all the responses on the items were similar from key personnel, particularly staff development, and teachers, indicating a consistent pattern about how teachers perceive the link between the school vision and evaluation of teaching practices.



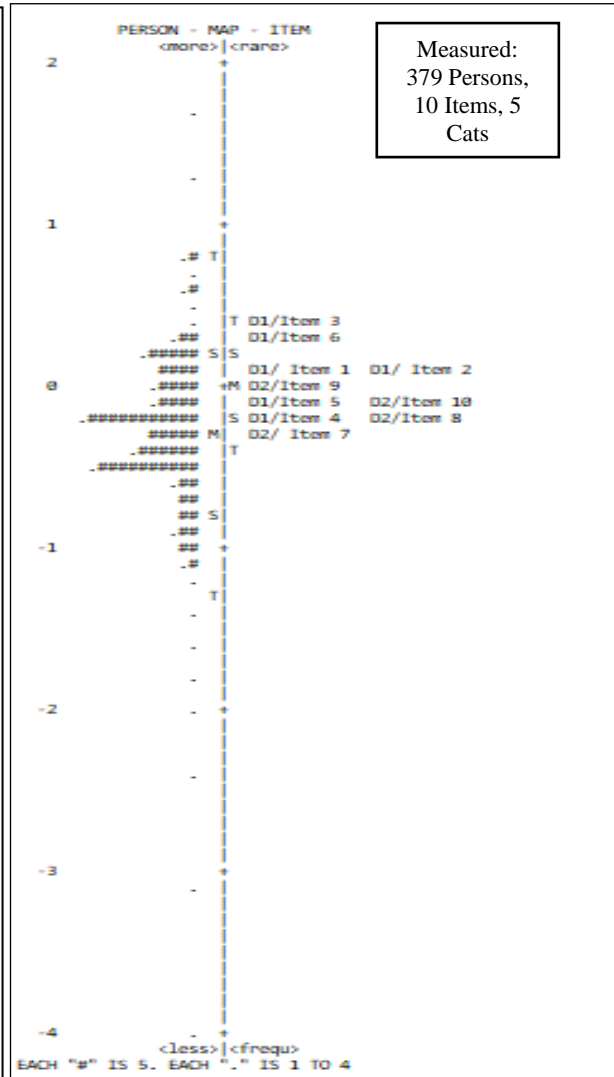
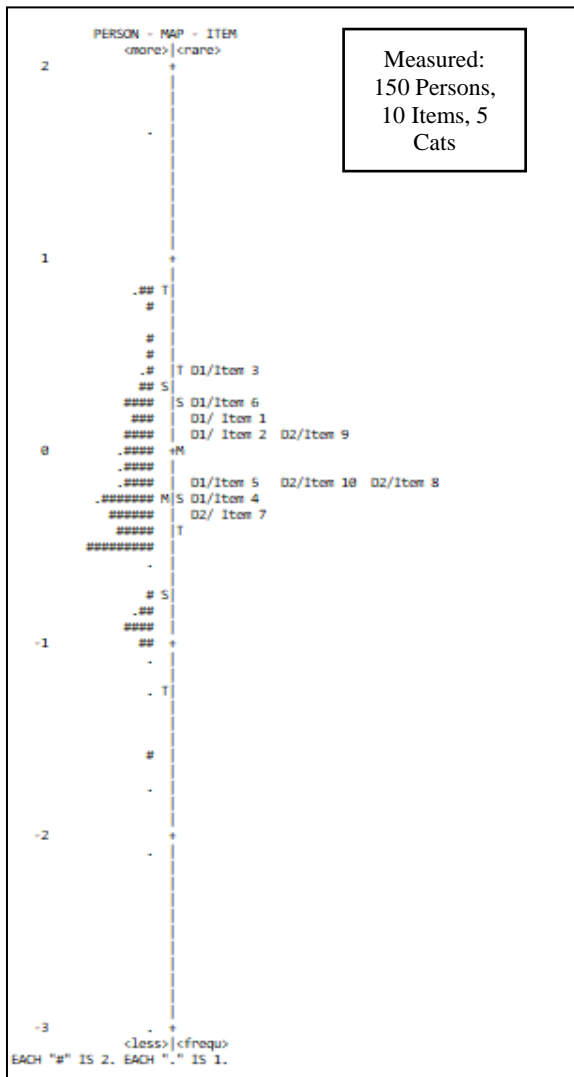


Figure 2: Wright Map of Key Personnel's Perceptions of Principals' Staff Development

Figure 3: Wright Map of Teachers' Perceptions of Principal's Staff Development

### Finding 2: Perceptions of Principals' Curriculum Development.

Data from Figure 4 and Figure 5 indicated that principals were rated highly in curriculum development. However, upon closer scrutiny, some interesting differences among the educational practices of principals were noted. First, items 11, 13, 15, 16, and 17 are ranked above the mean of the item side, while items 12, 18, 19, and 20 are ranked below the mean of the same side. In other words, key personnel and teachers found it more difficult to endorse the items describing the more direct efforts of principals in curriculum development. Meanwhile, most key personnel and teachers agreed with the items that depict principals encouraging all staff to reflect on their educational practices and excellence in curriculum development.

These findings primarily reflect that curriculum development in Jordan is a necessary process that plays a vital role in shaping the country's education system. The government of Jordan has been working tirelessly to enhance the country's education quality, and one of the keyways of achieving this is through effective curriculum development. The curriculum development process in Jordan is a collaborative effort involving educators, policymakers, and curriculum experts (Tutunji et al., 2007). This process aims to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant, current, and responsive to the needs of students across the country. One of the major challenges in this process is creating an inclusive curriculum that addresses the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of Jordanian students. To tackle this, the government has actively partnered with various stakeholders to design a curriculum that is sensitive to these differences while maintaining alignment with both national and international standards (Al-Husban & Akkari, 2021). By incorporating meaningful and contextually

appropriate content, Jordan's curriculum development efforts strive to equip students with the knowledge and skills essential for success in the 21st century. Overall, this ongoing process depends heavily on effective collaboration and communication among all involved parties to continuously improve the quality of education (Khan Al-Daami & Wallace, 2007).

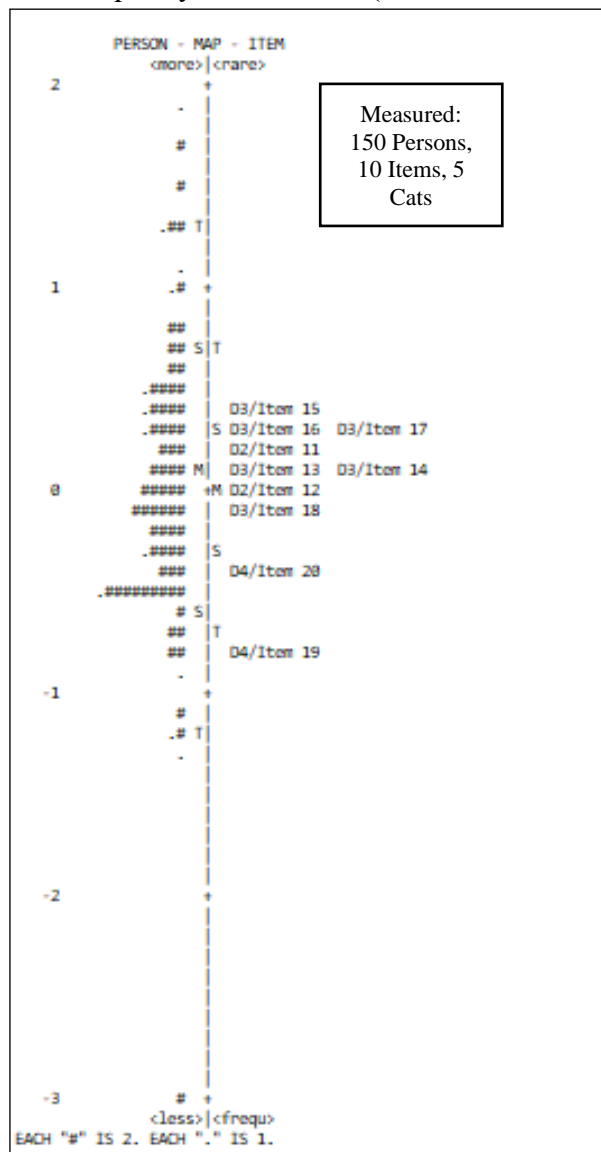


Figure 4: Wright Map of Key Personnel's of Principals' Curriculum Development

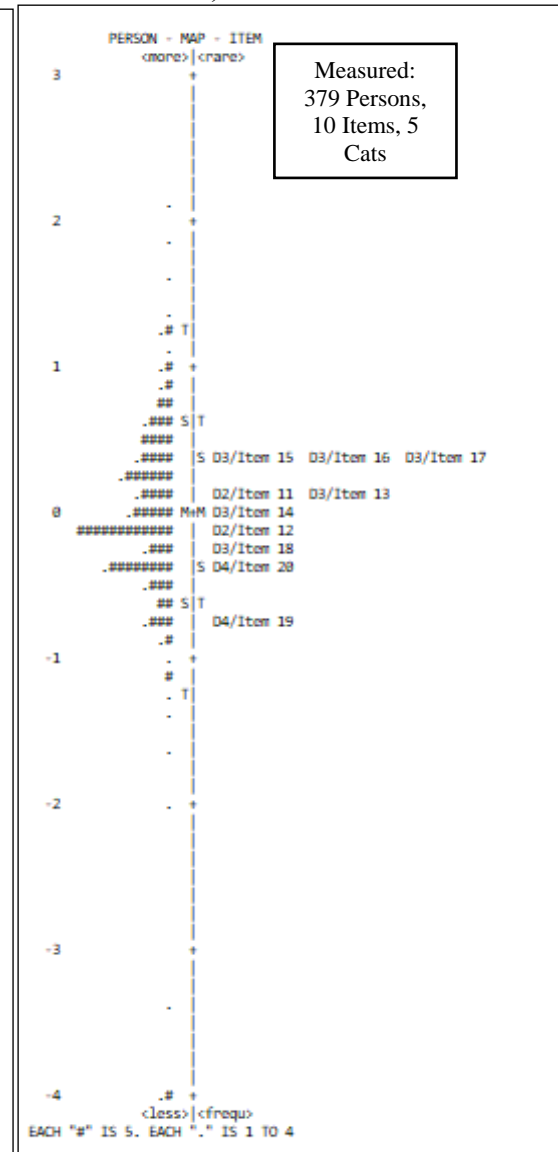


Figure 5: Wright Map of Teachers' Perceptions Perceptions of Principal's Curriculum Development

### Finding 3: Perceptions of Principals' Defining the School's Mission.

Data from Figure 6 and Figure 7 indicated that principals were rated highly in defining the school's mission. However, upon closer scrutiny, some interesting differences among the educational practices of principals were noted. First, items 21, 22, and 24 are ranked above the mean of the item side, while items 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30 are ranked below the mean of the same side. In other words, key personnel and teachers found it more difficult to endorse the items describing the more direct efforts of principals in defining the school's mission. Meanwhile, most key personnel and teachers agreed with the items that depict principals encouraging all staff to reflect on their educational practices and excellence in defining the school's mission.

These findings primarily reflect the Jordan educational system, especially in defining the school's mission. The schools in Jordan's mission are to provide a high-quality education that prepares our students for success in their future endeavours (Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender, 2008). We

strive to create a safe and supportive learning environment where students can discover their passions, develop critical thinking skills, and become responsible and compassionate members of society. The schools are committed to promoting diversity and inclusivity, and we believe that every student deserves equal access to educational opportunities (Pickstone-Taylor, 2015). We aim to foster community within our school and encourage students to embrace their unique identities and cultural backgrounds. In addition to academic excellence, we also prioritize the development of character and leadership skills (Guzmán et al., 2020). Our students have the potential to impact the world positively, and we aim to empower them to be agents of change in their communities. The mission is to provide a well-rounded education that equips our students with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world (Abdullah & Osman, 2010).

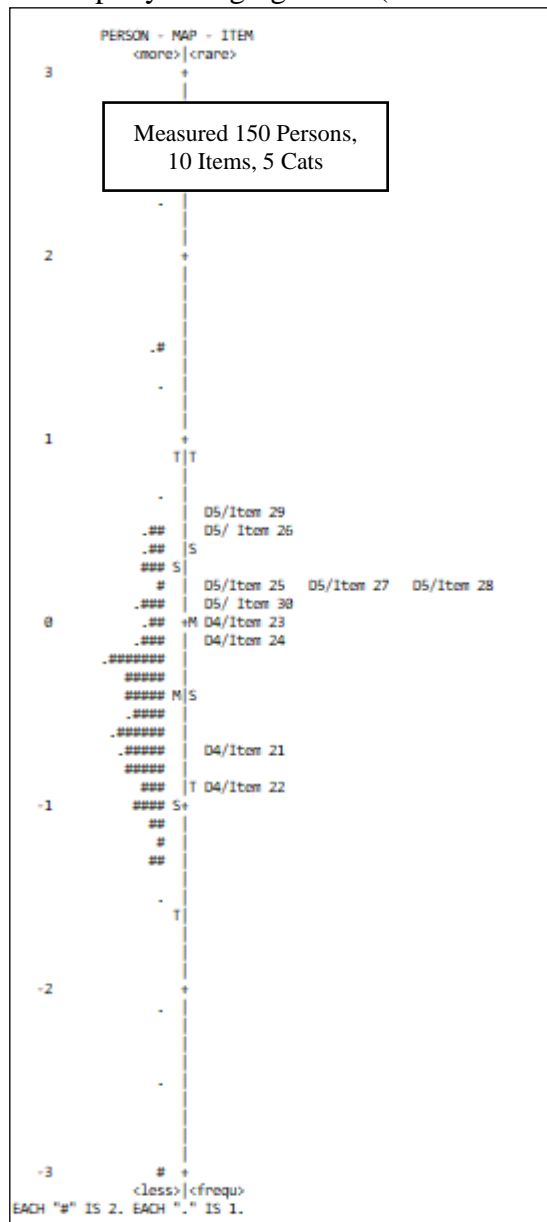


Figure 6: Wright Map of Key Personnel's of Principals Defining the School's Mission

#### Finding 4: Perceptions of Principals' Managing the Educational Programme.

Data from Figure 8 and Figure 9 indicate that principals were rated highly in managing the educational programme. However, upon closer scrutiny, some interesting differences among the educational practices of principals were noted. First, items 33, 35, 36, 37, 39, and 40 are ranked above the mean of the item side, while items 31, 32, and 38 are ranked below the mean of the same side. In other words, key personnel and teachers found it more difficult to endorse the items describing the more

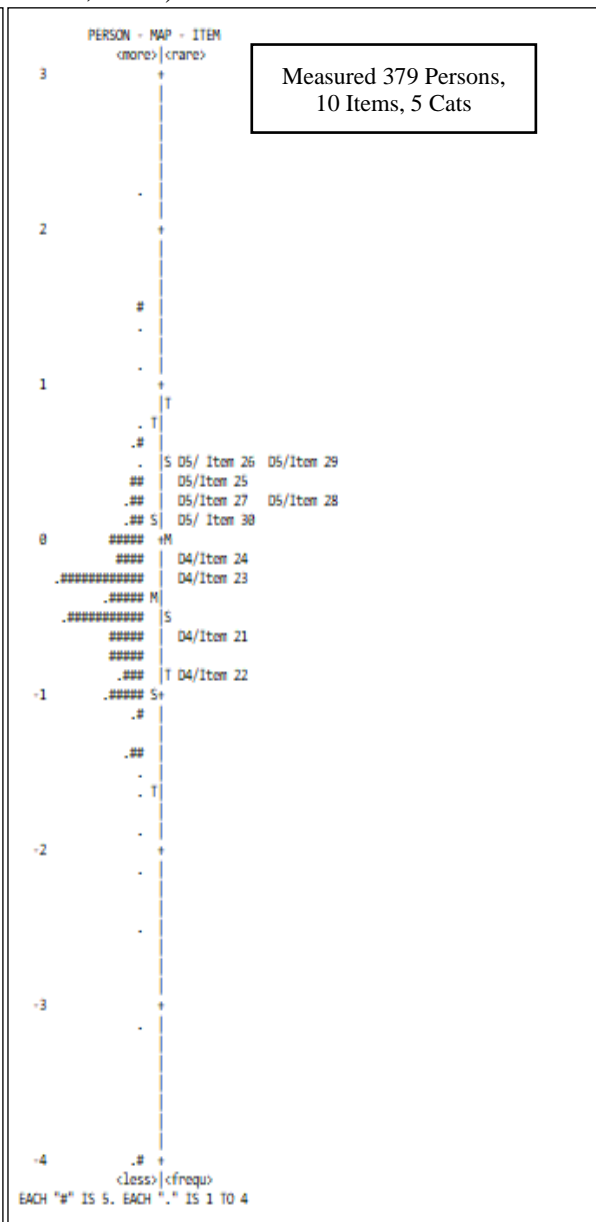


Figure 7: Wright Map of Teachers' Perceptions Perceptions of Principals Defining the School's Mission

direct efforts of principals in managing the educational programme. Meanwhile, most key personnel and teachers agreed with the items that depict principals encouraging all staff to reflect on their educational practices and excellence in managing the educational programme.

These findings primarily reflect the Jordan educational system, especially in managing the educational programme. Managing the instructional programme in Jordan requires a comprehensive approach that considers the diverse needs of students and the unique challenges educators face. Establishing clear goals and objectives for the programme and providing ongoing support and professional development opportunities for teachers is essential. In addition, effective communication and collaboration with stakeholders, including parents, community members, and policymakers, is crucial for ensuring the programme's success. By working together and prioritising student learning and growth, Jordan can continue to provide high-quality education for all its students (Al-Adwan & Smedley, 2012; Kalargyrou et al., 2012).

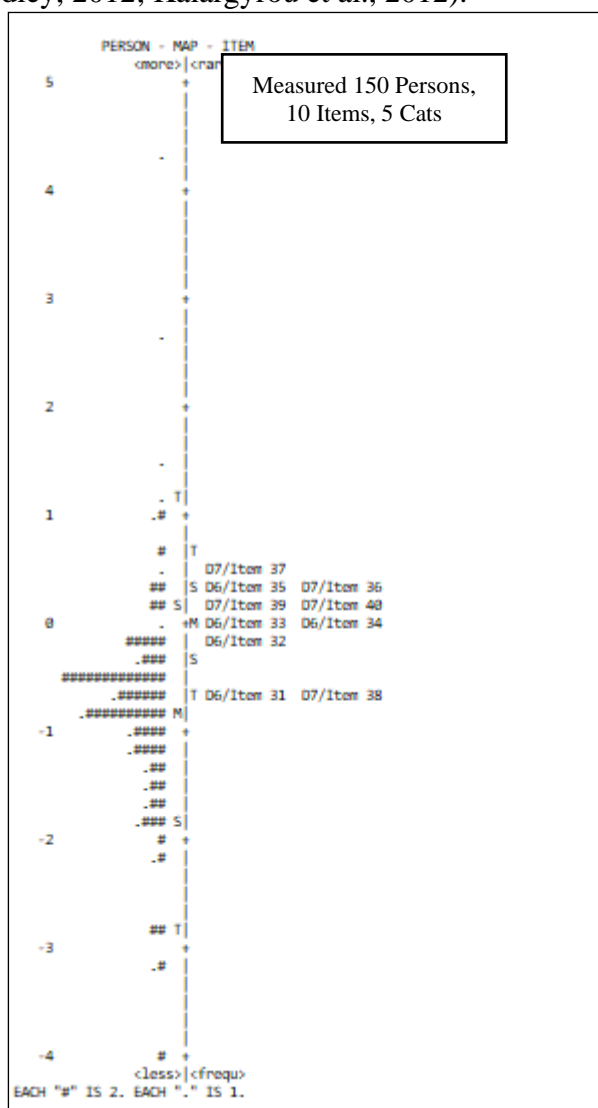


Figure 8: Wright Map of Key Personnel's Perceptions of Principals Managing the Instructions Program

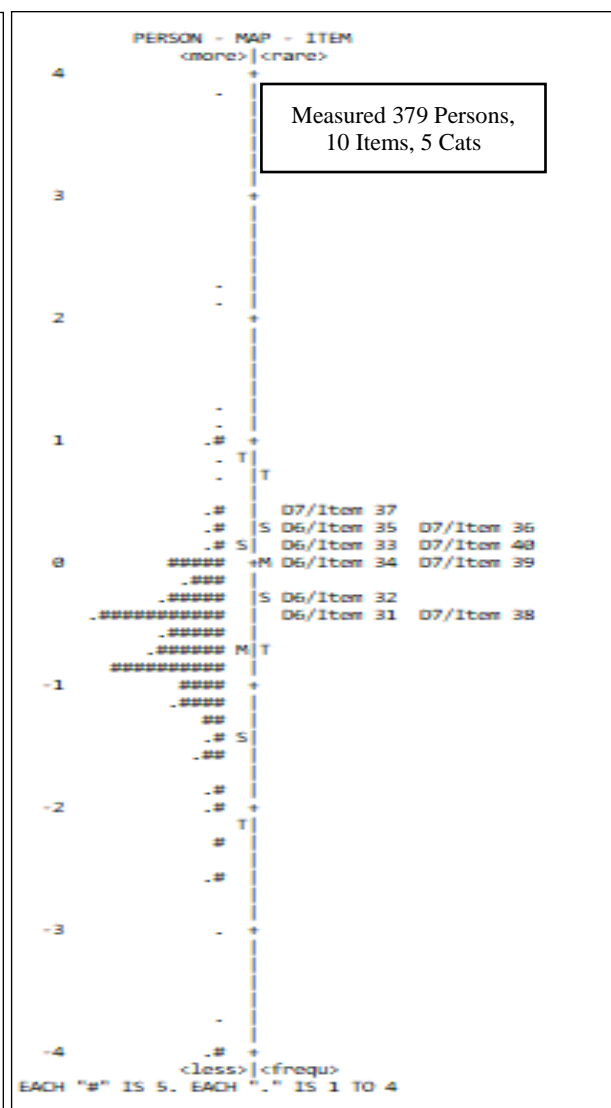


Figure 9: Wright Map of Teachers' Perceptions of Principals Managing the Instructions Program

#### **Finding 5: Perceptions of Principals' Promoting Positive School Learning.**

Data from Figure 8 and Figure 9 indicated that principals were rated highly in promoting positive school learning. However, upon closer scrutiny, almost half of the items, 6 out of 10, were ranked above the mean of the item side, which were items 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, and 50, while items 40, 41, 42, 43, and 48 were ranked below the mean of the same side. In other words, key personnel and teachers found it more difficult to endorse the items describing the more direct efforts of principals in

promoting positive school learning. Meanwhile, most key personnel and teachers agreed with the items that depict principals encouraging all staff to reflect on their educational practices and excellence in promoting positive school learning. These findings primarily reflect the Jordan educational system, especially in promoting positive school learning. As educators and parents, we want to promote positive school learning experiences for our children in Jordan. We can achieve this goal in several ways, including ensuring our schools provide a safe and welcoming environment for all students (Jansen, 2006). We can also empower our children to take an active role in their own education by involving them in decision-making and giving them opportunities to share their ideas and opinions. This can be fostered through class discussions, group projects, and other collaborative activities. Additionally, nurturing a love of learning is key, which we can do by exposing children to a wide range of subjects and diverse teaching methods (Altarawneh & Alomoush, 2022). This might include integrating technology into the classroom, providing hands-on experiences, and offering extracurricular activities that cater to different interests. Finally, supporting our children's academic success means ensuring they have access to essential resources such as tutoring, mentoring, academic support services, and advanced or enrichment courses. By working together to create positive and enriching school experiences, we can help Jordanian children unlock their full potential and prepare them for a successful future (Goldman et al., 2012).

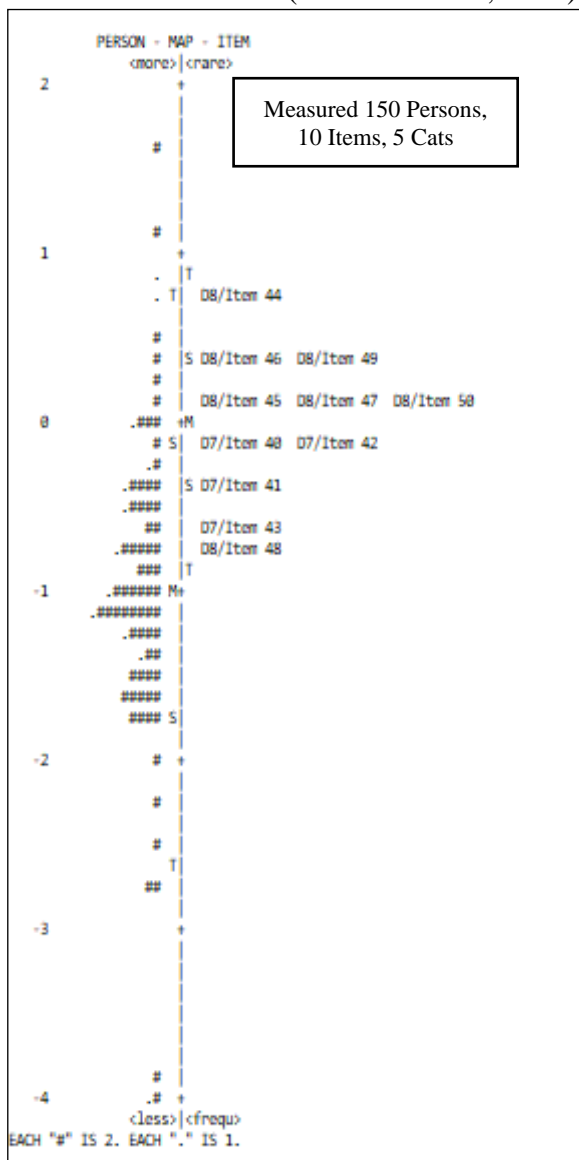


Figure 10: Wright Map of Key Personnel's Perceptions of Principals Promoting Positive School Learning

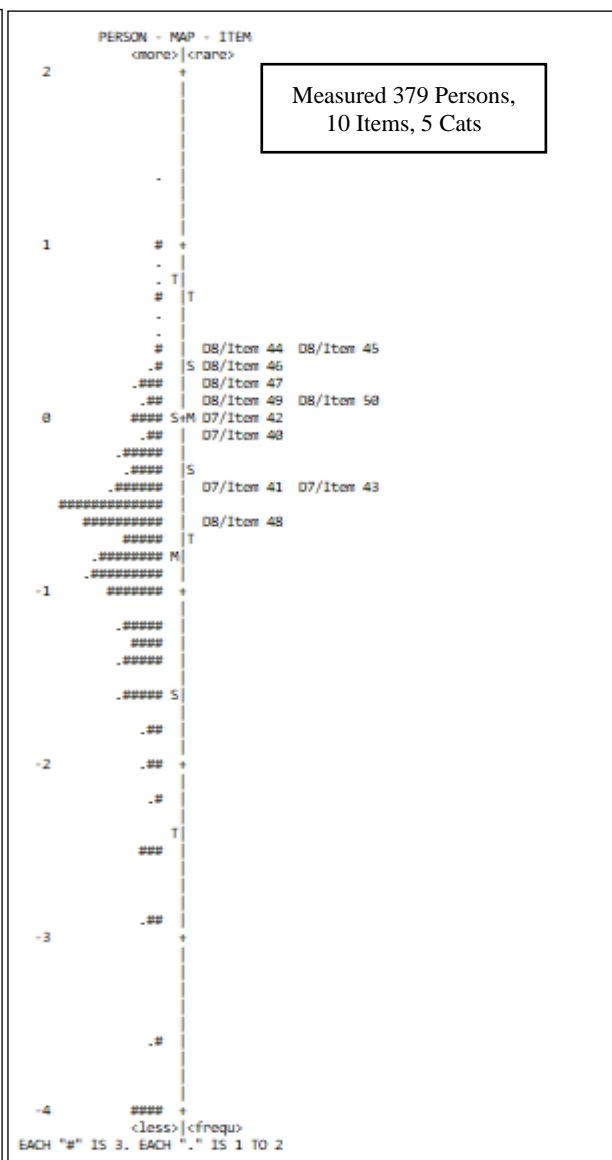


Figure 11: Wright Map of Teachers' Perceptions of Principals Promoting Positive School Learning



#### 4. Discussion

The study on perceptions of principals' staff development (see Figures 2 and 3) aligns closely with established literature on assessment validity. The findings reveal that the distribution of scale items relative to examinees' abilities supports best practices for comprehensive assessment. This alignment between item difficulty and respondent ability enhances the validity of the instrument, consistent with Messick (1989) framework. Additionally, observed patterns in item difficulty shed light on perceived strengths and challenges within staff development, echoing insights from Leithwood et al., (2004). Furthermore, the consistency in responses among key personnel highlights the critical role of shared vision and collaboration in cultivating a positive school culture, as emphasized by Sergiovanni (1996). The findings presented in Figures 4 and 5 on perceptions of principals' curriculum development align with existing literature that highlights the pivotal role of effective curriculum development in improving education quality. Principals' strong ratings in this domain reflect Jordan's ongoing commitment to enhancing its education system through targeted curriculum reforms. Researchers such as Tutunji et al. (2007) and Khan Al-Daami and Wallace (2007) emphasize the importance of curriculum development in addressing the diverse needs of students across Jordan. However, variations in the ratings reveal particular strengths and challenges within current practices, indicating areas that require further improvement—especially concerning inclusivity and cultural sensitivity, as discussed by Al-Husban and Akkari (2021). The study also reinforces the value of stakeholder collaboration in curriculum development, consistent with literature advocating participatory approaches that promote curriculum relevance and responsiveness to students' evolving needs.

The data presented in Figures 6 and 7 reveal high ratings for principals in defining the school's mission, underscoring the vital role mission clarity plays within the Jordanian educational system. Nonetheless, subtle variations in these ratings point to potential challenges and areas for growth in this leadership dimension. This finding aligns with existing literature that highlights the importance of a well-defined mission in steering educational institutions, as emphasized by Pickstone-Taylor (2015), who stresses the need for quality education and inclusivity to be embedded within the mission. Furthermore, the strong agreement with items related to principals fostering staff reflection and striving for excellence resonates with research advocating collaborative mission development, as noted by Guzmán et al. (2020) and Abdullah & Osman (2010), both of whom highlight the significance of character development and holistic education.

The data from Figures 8 and 9 reveal high ratings for principals in promoting positive school learning, highlighting the strong focus on creating enriching learning experiences within the Jordanian educational system. Consistent with existing literature, these efforts encompass establishing safe and welcoming environments, encouraging student involvement in decision-making, and nurturing a passion for learning through diverse instructional approaches. Jansen et al., (2006) emphasize the critical role of supportive environments, while Altarawneh & Alomoush (2022) underscore the importance of engaging students in varied learning activities to spark their curiosity and sustain their interest. However, discrepancies in ratings for specific items indicate differing perspectives among stakeholders on the direct efforts of principals in promoting positive school learning. While further research could explore these differences, collaborative efforts to enhance positive learning experiences can contribute to students' academic success and overall development, as Goldman et al. (2012) emphasized.

Overall, in Jordan, school principals are widely recognized as influential educational leaders. However, recent assessments indicate room for improvement in the evaluated five dimensions of educational leadership. Despite this, it is essential to note that research worldwide has consistently shown that the impact of principal educational leadership is particularly significant in schools (Goldring et al., 2009; Oplatka & Arar, 2017; Reeves, 2008). One possible explanation for this finding is that students in secondary schools are often more specialized than primary school students. It means there is a deeper compartmentalisation within secondary schools, with subject teachers possessing more content and pedagogical knowledge than principals. On the other hand, successful primary

school principals typically have a high level of curricular knowledge that rivals that of their teachers. As a result, secondary school principals may rely more heavily on their department heads to directly oversee and provide feedback on their teachers' curriculum implementation, teaching, and student learning (Corcoran & Silander, 2009; Seashore Louis & Lee, 2016).

## 5. Conclusion

Hence, analysis of data indicated that Jordanian principals are rated as being very strong in the current dimensions investigated in this study, which were 1) staff development, 2) curriculum development, 3) defining the school's mission, 4) managing the instructional program, 5) promoting positive school learning. It reflects Jordanian principals' emphasis on putting the school vision into actual practice. The findings of this study also allow an inference that the vision in Jordanian schools is not rigid at all. Instead, principals were perceived to be active in reviewing the vision to ascertain its relevance to the school's teaching and learning needs. Again, Jordanian principals actively created a school culture of teacher collaboration. This inference is strengthened by previous studies on educational leadership that have demonstrated and suggested principals as 'culture builders' (Hallinger, 2005). In addition, the MoE initiative in developing professional learning communities in schools is inextricably linked with Jordanian principals being firm in this educational dimension. Respondents perceived that principals tried to create interactive platforms and multi-disciplined teams in the school. Besides, attention was paid to the design of the school site so that it could better facilitate learning and teaching collaboration. Last, Jordanian principals were rated strong in the dimensions that were studied in the study (Amr, 2011).

## 6. Suggestions for Further Research

In closing, it is important to recognise several limitations that suggest avenues for future research:

1. This study was limited to examining only five dimensions of educational leadership, albeit with a relatively large sample size compared to the number of schools in Jordan.
2. This empirical study offered an informative overview of principal educational leadership practices, but further research on leadership styles and processes is needed. As May and Supovitz (2011) noted, such research would shed light on how principals express themselves and facilitate change.
3. An international study comparing educational leadership among effective Middle Eastern education systems could be highly illuminating.
4. This article has provided a more nuanced understanding of the Jordanian context through the interactions and actions of leaders with their followers.

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