

Editorial

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This special issue carries selected papers presented at the virtual conference hosted by the British University in Dubai on 3rd June, 2023. The conference aimed to explore and take account of the voices of researchers and practitioners on 'emerging challenges in educational management and leadership'. The conference was also keen on engaging voices, thoughts, reflections and practices of leaders, policy makers, practitioners and researchers in education. The notion that managing and leading education as an art as well as a science is often contested. It is argued that the ever-changing world, the growing demands for quality in education, resources constraints, political wills and other similar prevailing realities continue to pose challenges for managers and leaders in education to rise to the occasion and deliver effectively (Abukari & David, 2022).

The first paper in this issue focuses on understanding the influence of school leaders' feedback on the professional growth of teachers and their overall performance within the context of school improvement. It is an empirical study that generated data from school leaders and subject teachers using qualitative questionnaires. Evidence from the data shows that feedback from school leaders 'improves the quality of teaching instructions, fosters a loyal culture among staff members, develops teachers as leaders in their positions, and enhances school performance through better students' academic achievements'. The paper indicates that although there are some limitations in the study, the outcome has the potential to inform practitioners and policy makers on how to improve school principals' feedback to teachers to make it more effective.

The second paper, 'Exploring School Leadership and Teachers' Perspectives on the Effectiveness of Classroom Observation on Tracking Curriculum Implementation: A Case Study in a Private School in Abu Dhabi', explores 'the effectiveness of classroom observation as a tool to track the quality of curriculum delivery from the perspectives of heads of departments and teachers'. The research sought the opinion of heads of departments and teachers through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and analysis of relevant documents. Findings from the research shows that the classroom observation approach used exhibited the essential qualities that are aligned to the goals of the curriculum, hence shows some positive influence on the quality of curriculum delivery. The paper also emphasised the need for teachers to integrated appropriate pedagogical expertise and their rich experience into the implementation of the curriculum to facilitate an effective curriculum delivery.

Based on a systematic review of relevant literature, the third paper, assess the role of education leaders in developing innovation and creativity in the secondary education system in the United Arab Emirates. Although the review did not identify a single paper on the role of school leaders in developing innovation and creativity, it identified traces of influence and potential influence of educational leadership on creativity, innovation, teacher performance, and student outcomes in the selected literature sources. The review found that managerial support for creativity was likely to promote creativity and innovation in teaching and in learning, with particular reference to the potential of transformational leadership to promote innovation and creativity in secondary schools. The paper identified a number of barriers hampering the efforts of educational leaders from implementing innovative and creative practices and presented a number of suggestions that would help deal with the barriers.

Paper four in the issue looks at the role and impact of educational leadership in change management with the aim to improve the quality of education in a private school in Dubai. The research used a mixed-method design to collect quantitative data through a questionnaire from

70 teachers and qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with 10 school leaders. The results indicate that educational leaders play an important role in change management which results in producing outstanding academic performance. School leaders provided informed perspectives on how to overcome challenges in change management. The paper has highlighted a number of implications the results might have on policy and practice.

The final paper explores the role of school leaders on enhancing staff wellbeing for School improvement based on a case study in a Private School in Dubai. Based on two open-ended questionnaires, the research collected data from two school leaders and twenty teachers to understand the role of school leaders in enhancing staff wellbeing for School improvement. The findings underscored the importance of leadership in the development and successful implementation of programmes to promote the wellbeing of teachers and staff. Teachers emphasised on a number of attributes of wellbeing that are essential for the overall school development.

It is hope that this issue would continue the strides of the Journal of Researching Education Practice to share the rich experience of education practitioners.

References

Abukari, A., & David, S. (2022). Future of educational management and leadership: leading the way. *Journal for Researching Education Practice and Theory*, 5(2), 1-5.