

# THE DEGREE THAT ADMINISTRATORS DEPEND UPON DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES WITHIN THEIR SCHOOLS, AS ESTIMATED BY PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN KARAK

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## Abstract

This study aimed at investigating principals' estimation of the degree of practicing administration depending on the foundations of democracy in public schools in Karak governorate, by answering the following questions:

1-To what degree is administration based on the foundations of democracy practiced in public schools, as estimated by principals of these schools in Karak?

2- Are there any substantial statistical differences ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in how principals utilize democratic practices due to the principals' gender, qualifications, experience, and school level?

The sample of the study consists of the principals of the public schools in Karak (266) for the academic year (2012-2013). A questionnaire was constructed to collect the required data. It consists of two parts; the first part deals with personal information such as gender, qualification, work experience, and school level. The second part consists of (50) paragraphs, each paragraph was given five weights by Likert scale, and these paragraphs were divided into (4) domains which are the Independent variables of the study.

The major findings of the study were the following:

1-Justice and equity principle achieved the highest mean, while the principle of freedom and opinion expression achieved the lowest mean.

2--There are no substantial statistical differences ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in how principals utilize democratic practices due to the principals' gender, qualifications, experience, and school level.

Depending on the results of the study the researchers recommended the following:

1- Giving more attention to applying democratic principles in our educational institutions, and allowing students to express their ideas freely.

2-Conducting further studies dealing with the utilization of foundations of democracy in public schools and the perceptions of principals, teachers, students and parents of democracy in schools.

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**Keywords:** Democracy, Democratic foundations , Estimates of the degree of democracy

## **Introduction**

The goal of education is to prepare the individual to be capable of lifelong learning, work independently with others, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity and interacting well with the world around him. Dewey (2008) stated that education is not preparing for life, but life itself (Littky and Grabell,2004).

David (2013) refers to the educational philosophy of Albert Einstein, which considers the implicit goal of education is focused on enabling students to achieve their goals, active student involvement in activities and lessons, as one of the positive contributions to self, to others, and to society.

Dewey believes that social reform is led by and dependent upon education. Also, he measures the success of education not by student memorization of information, but by progress in students' personality and behavior (Dewey, 2008).

According to Rodriguez and Others (1997) the vision and mission of the school administration emerges from the following foundations of democracy:

1- Authority: The individual's right to do something that is written within an organization's instructions, laws, or regulations, and other members of the organization are expected to respect the given authority ,

2- Justice: the equitable distribution of benefits, each according to what he deserves, and the pursuit of security and social stability,

3 - Responsibility: an ethical commitment to work, and

4 - Privacy: the scope and domain of an individual. The right of the individual not to be watched, and the right to express his opinion without persecution, as well as the right that determines the extent to which the information is shared.

Democracy is a way of life in a democratic society, and the responsibility of education is to increase democratic practices in society.

Moss and Urban (2010) confirm the importance of the adoption of democracy in education, experiential learning, and the importance of learning lessons from life.

The Jordanian Ministry of Education has focused on the premise that education is first and foremost a political project, is a lifelong endeavor and that the current circumstances require transparency and a strong democracy

and an experimental approach in the making of educational policy, practice and evaluation. It also focused on the role of the principal in implementing democratic processes within schools and instilling democratic values among students. This can be achieved by providing a suitable environment, modern techniques, multiple skills, and applying scientific methods in solving problems (Ministry of Education, 2010).

In spite of the educational development programs which focused on the principal's skills, the results of Radish's study (2012) indicate that Jordanian public schools are still relatively far away from the democratic approach, and that the Arab educational institutions failed to create trends in educational democracy.

Zyoud and Al-Hijazin (2011) point out that the Jordanian schools are suffering from violence and negative behavioral problems from students, in boys' schools in particular. This subject is very important for school safety, because the violence from public schools continues later in Jordanian universities.

Based on the previous research and the experience of the researchers of this study in teaching and school administration, there is a decrease in the level of practicing the foundations of democracy in the public schools of Jordan. This motivates the researchers to conduct this study on the degree that administrators depend upon democratic practices within their schools, as estimated by principals of public schools in Karak.

### **Previous Studies**

After referring to previous research, it was observed that most of the studies on democracy and education have tried to detect the democratic practices in universities and colleges, while attention to democratic practices in schools was very modest. Therefore, some similar studies will be presented in chronological order from oldest to newest.

Rashdan (2003) conducts an analytical study aimed to identify the values and principles of democracy in educational philosophy and objectives in Jordan, through the analysis of the content of the Education Law No. 3 for the year 1994, and the Jordanian National Charter of 1990. The researcher conducts a content analysis as well as individual interviews with a number of directors of departments and directorates in the Ministry of Education, with the aim of detecting the reflection of the values and principles of democracy on education. The results show that the education law contained the values and principles of democracy, such as freedom, human dignity, opinion sharing, and human rights. The results of the study also show the degree of how much these principals are applied in education varied according to awareness of members of the educational community.

Yaung (2004) discusses the role that citizenship education can and should play in producing democratic citizens in the information age. He analyses and compares the recent curricula and educational policy developments in citizenship education in Australian and South Korea. More specifically, the study attempts to identify what implications the advances of ICTs have and what future tasks they impose for the field of democratic citizenship education.

Ne'mat Allah (2008), in his study, aims to identify the Arab experiences in the development of the values of citizenship. He reviews the experience of the Egyptian, Saudi, Tunisian, and Jordanian schools. The study concludes that the Arab countries are improving in the process of establishing the values of citizenship within education.

Shafiq (2009) investigates the effect of one's level of education and income on support for democracy in five predominantly Muslim countries: Indonesia, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Turkey. This study finds that secondary education and higher education encourage support for democracy and this is a social benefit of education in Jordan, Lebanon and Pakistan. Regarding income, the results indicate that relative to the poor, those belonging to middle-income groups are more supportive of democracy in Lebanon and Turkey. Curiously, there is no statistical relationship between belonging to the richest groups and supporting democracy.

Mahafdeh and Elian (2009), in their study, seek to determine the degree of application of the principles of democracy in schools from the perspective of supervisors and teachers in Amman schools. The results show that the degree of application of democratic principals was high from the viewpoint of supervisors while medium from the point of view of teachers.

Saud (2009) conducts a study aimed to identify patterns of management behavior for secondary school principals in Jordan and its relationship to the level of organizational loyalty of the teachers to their schools. The findings of the study confirm that Jordanian principals exercise four administrative patterns, but the democratic and participatory style is highly practiced.

Amayreh and Maqablah (2010) examine the role of the school in instilling democratic behavior in students. The most important outcome of the study was that the school plays a large role in instilling democratic behavior, while practicing of democratic behavior by students within schools was low.

Frehat, and Rawashda (2010) find out the perceptions of teachers of secondary schools in Ajloun towards democracy. The study concludes that secondary schools teachers positively perceived democracy in schools.

Nazr (2010) explores the potential for democratic change in educational practice in Pakistan. Using focus group discussions in urban and rural areas of Sindh and Balochistan, it paints a picture of educational practices from policy making to the implementation level of democratic

practices and identifies the barriers to democratic approaches in education. It suggests that educational practice in Pakistan is characterized by authoritarian and bureaucratic inaction, and collaboration and reflection play little part in decision-making.

McVeigh and Barnett (2010), in their study, argue that the inherent flaw in the current Ontario civics curriculum is that it does not focus on patriotism. Creating a community of learners based qualities of citizenship and good governance, such as patriotism, is the key element to the revitalization of a deteriorating democracy.

Alexander and Van (2010) note a change in the educational system in South Africa which moved the education system of racist practices to democratic life. The results show that, although the government and educational legislation in South Africa paved the way for thinking differently in education, administrators did not practice the virtues of democracy within schools which does not lead to a democratic society. Researchers attributed the reason that some of these managers before 1994, prior to any democratic transformation, did not learn the virtues of democracy.

Bektas (2013) surveys the opinions of teachers in the province of Sakarya about whether teaching democratic concepts to first grade students was appropriate for their developmental level. The results show that all surveyed teachers did not find vocabulary related to democracy that is suitable for first grade students.

### **Statement of the Problem of the Study**

The problem of the study is to answer the following main question: What is the degree that administrators depend upon democratic practices within their schools, as estimated by principals of public schools in Karak?

### **The Significance of the Study**

This study sheds light on a very important topic, which helps to enrich the literature on the administration based on the foundations of democracy. It is hoped that the study provides information that may benefit both: Curricula authors and policy makers, and trainers of administrative staff so that they focus on the application of the foundations of democracy.

### **The Objectives of the Study**

This study aimed to answer the main following questions:

1- To what degree is administration based on the foundations of democracy practiced in public schools, as estimated by principals of these schools in Karak ?

2- Is there a statistically significant difference at the level of significance ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) from the viewpoint of principals in the public schools

in Karak to the reality of the practice of the administration basing on the foundations of democracy due gender, qualification, experience, and school level?

**Definition of Terms**

Democracy : the freedom of the individual to think as he wants. This freedom takes into account public before private interest.

- Democratic foundations :the set of values and basic principles of democracy including authority, responsibility, privacy and justice.
- Estimates of the degree of democracy: the school principals’ perceptions of the degree to which each democratic foundation is implemented within their school.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study was limited to the principals of public schools in Karak, Jordan for the academic year 2012-2013.

**Research Methodology**

The study aimed to determine the degree that administrators implement the foundations of democracy in the public schools in Karak as estimated by the principals of those schools.

**The Sample of the Study**

**The sample of the study** consists of the principals of the public schools in Karak (266) for the academic year (2012-2013). Table 1 below shows the distribution of the principals of the public schools in the study and the independent variables.

Table 1: the distribution of the principals of the public schools in the study and the independent variables.

<u>Variables</u>	<u>categories</u>	<u>number</u>
Level of school	basic	180
	secondary	86
Gender	Male	85
	female	181
Qualification	Diploma	50
	BA	46
	Graduate	170
Job experience	less than 5 years	40
	less than 10 years	49
	10+years	177

## **Variables**

The study includes the following variables:

A - Independent variables include:

- 1 - Gender: (male, female),
- 2 - Qualification: (Diploma, Bachelor, Graduate),
- 3 - Work Experience: (less than 5 years, 5-10 years, more than 10 years), and
- 4 - School level (basic, secondary).

B - Dependent variables include:

- 1 - Respect the student's personality, represented in paragraphs (1-14),
- 2 - Freedom of expression, represented in paragraphs (15-28),
- 3 - Justice and Equality, represented in paragraphs (29-40) and
- 4- Provide educational opportunities and equivalence, represented in paragraphs (41-50).

## **Instrument of the Study**

A questionnaire was constructed to collect the required data to measure the degree to which administration is based on the foundations of democracy practiced in public schools, as estimated by principals of these schools in Karak. The questionnaire consists of two parts; The first part deals with personal information such as gender, qualification, work experience, and school level. The second part consists of (50) paragraphs, each paragraph was given five weights by Likert scale, and these paragraphs were divided into (4) domains which are the Independent variables of the study.

## **Instrument validity and stability**

Validity of the questionnaire was assured through displaying it to a group of arbitrators including professors and experts in educational administration to know its suitability to measure the variables of the study. Based on the views of the arbitrators some modifications have been applied.

The stability of the questionnaire was ascertained by using the method of test-retest for exploratory sample consists of (15) principal. Pearson correlation coefficient reached (0.87). Cronbach Alpha has been extracted to identify the degree of internal consistency for the answers of the study sample, which was worth (88%) which is higher than the standard percentage (60%).

## **Statistical Analysis**

To answer the first question, averages were extracted and arranged in descending order. To answer the second question, the researchers applied the use of multiple analysis of variance (One Way Manova).

## The Results of the Study

This study aimed to detect the degree to which administrators implement the foundations of democracy in public schools in Karak, as estimated by principals of these schools. Also, to show how this practice differs depending on the gender , scientific qualifications, and experience of the principals, in addition to the school level.

### Results related to the first question

Concerning the first question which dealt to what degree is administration based on the foundations of democracy practiced in public schools, as estimated by principals of these schools in Karak?

The mean and the standard deviation of the areas of study have been extracted, taking into account that it is measured as follows: high (3.5 or higher), medium (2.6-3.49), and low (2.5). Table (2) **shows the** averages and standard deviations for the answers of the participants of the study.

Table (2): Averages and standard deviations for the answers of the participants of the study.

Sequence of paragraphs from the questionnaire	TheField (Dependent Variables)	the arithmetic average	standard deviation	Field level according to standard deviation mean of the field
29-40	Justice and Equality	3.74	0.46	High
41-50	Providing educational opportunities and equivalence	3.32	0.56	Medium
1-14	respecting the student's personality	3.24	0.45	Medium
28-15	freedom of expression	3.10	0.55	Medium
Total average		3.35	0.44	Medium

Table (2) **shows** that the arithmetic means of the fields “Respecting the student's personality”, “Freedom of expression”, “Providing educational opportunities and equivalence” were medium, while the arithmetic mean of the field “Justice and Equality” was high. The highest average was accounted for the field “Justice and Equality” and with an average of 3.74. While the lowest arithmetic average was for “freedom of expression” and it was 3.10.

### First: The field of justice and equality

The results indicate that the majority of the paragraphs in the field of “Justice and equality” have had a high average. Paragraph number 30 (the application of regulations and instructions to students without discrimination) has ranked first with a mean (4.46). This was followed by paragraph 31 (the role of teachers in monitoring students' performance fairly and without

discrimination) with a mean (4.27). The last paragraph 37 (offering students violators on board to adjust the feel of justice, equality) had an arithmetic average of (2.80).

### **Secondly: the field of educational opportunities and equivalence**

The results indicate that Paragraph 48 (providing equal educational opportunities to all students) has ranked first, with an arithmetic average (4.23). This was followed by paragraph 50 relating to the role of curriculum to guide each student to learn as far as can be learned and a mean (3.93). Paragraph number 43 (the promotion of all talented and develop their own programs) ranked the last, with arithmetic average (2.59).

### **Third: The field of respect for the student's personality**

The results indicate that the highest average account occupied the paragraph on receiving student outreach programs help reduce drop-out rates, with the mean ( 4.40) followed by paragraph 9 (the role of the curriculum to deepen the sense of belonging and good citizenship among students), with a mean (4.38). It is noted that most of the paragraphs got arithmetic averages ranged between (2.55-3.91).

### **Fourth: The field of freedom of opinion and expression**

The results show that paragraph 23 (the role of the curriculum for the purpose of positive feelings among students about the importance of freedom of expression for humans) had the highest average. The second highest average was found in paragraphs 16 and 25 (the role of the school administration on student expression and respect for the opinions of others) with means (3.67 and 3.54) respectively.

### **Results related to the second question**

Concerning the second question which dealt with whether there is a statistically significant difference at the level of significance ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) from the viewpoint of principals in the public schools in Karak to the reality of the practice of the administration basing on the foundations of democracy due gender, qualification, experience, and school level.

To answer the second question, Manova multivariate (Hotelling T2) and Oalex Lambada (Wilks' Lambda) were applied. Table (3) shows the results of the test MANOVA (One Way Manova).

Table (3): Results of the test MANOVA (One Way Manova).

source of variation	Hotelling T2 value	Wilks' Lambda value	significance level	Degrees of freedom	Degrees of freedom error
Gender	0.015	-	0.603	4	187
Qualification	-	0.964	0.541	8	374
experience	-	0.975	0.789	8	374
the school level	0.027	-	0.280	4	0.187

Table (3) shows that there are no significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) attributable to gender, qualification, experience, school level degree in administration based on the foundations of democracy.

### Discussion of the Findings

The most notable findings of the study:

1 - The most practiced democratic behaviors are related to the field of justice, equality, and the least related to the field of freedom of expression and opinion.

2 - The behaviors related to students' involvement in decision-making were the least practiced.

4 - In general, the degree of the administration building on the foundations of democracy in public schools in Karak is medium.

5 – There were no significant differences at the level of significance ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) attributed to gender, qualification, and job experience, and school level.

### Discussion of the results of the first question

The results of the analysis show that the degree of practicing administration based on the foundations of democracy in Karak public schools is moderate with an arithmetic average of (3.35). In spite of the policy pursued by the government to expand the democratic development of the Jordanian society and adapting to global changes and globalization, the degree of democratic practice in education was medium and this means that there is success in this area, but it is still modest, which requires research to determine the reasons. This may be attributed to most of the development programs and training held by the Ministry of Education, both for principals and teachers, focus heavily on the areas of planning, and improving the curriculum, and some modern concepts such as administrative innovation, etc., while we find that the interest in the concept of democracy in education is low.

In addition to this, the public schools are managed with rules and regulations issued by the central Ministry of Education. The rules and

regulations may not be flexible enough to meet the aspirations of the students.

The results of this study are consistent with the Rawadih's study (2012) which shows that the degree of democratic practice in Jordanian institutions is medium. They are also consistent with Zyoud and Hijjawi's study (2011), which show that there is a weakness in the application of democracy in schools, which led to the emergence of violence, and also consistent with Mahafdeh and Elian's study (2009), which indicate that the degree of applying democratic principles is medium.

On the other hand, the results of this study are not consistent with the results of Frehat's study (2010), which indicates that secondary schools teachers positively perceived democracy in schools. Also, the results disagree with Amayreh and Maqableh's study (2010), which indicate that the school plays a large role in instilling democratic behavior, while practicing of democratic behavior by students within schools was low.

The results of this study are also consistent with Yaung's study (2004) which attributes low application of democracy to the lack of awareness of teachers to the values and principles of democracy and Nazir's study (2012) which indicates that the educational practices in Pakistan are characterized by low degree of democracy, and Bektas's study (2013), and Alexander and Van's study (2010).

The highest average was accounted for the field of justice and equality, measured at (3.74). This can be explained highly to Islamic values, and faith that justice is closer to piety and this is consistent with the values of Arab culture.

The lowest arithmetic average was for the field of freedom of expression and opinion, measured at (3.10). This may be due to the reason that a lot of teachers and principals believe that students' freedom means to rebel against the laws and regulations.

The paragraphs relating to the role of the school curriculum to deepen the sense of belonging and citizenship received a high arithmetic average. This reflects the interest of the Ministry of Education in curriculum development.

The results of the study indicate that the administration uses the method of persuasion to make the students respect the instructions and regulations, and organize regular meetings with parents to help solve the problems at school. This may be attributed to the keenness of the Ministry of Education to create an atmosphere of affection and love and cooperation in educational institutions by urging principals to develop an atmosphere free from fear and coercion, which cripples the educational process. In addition, the Ministry of Education focuses on strengthening the relationship between the educational and community institutions, and the activation of special activities for community service and volunteer work.

The paragraphs that refer to the student's participation in the planning and preparation of the exams and lessons schedule and activities of the school, have received low arithmetic averages. This may be attributed to the lack of conviction of administrators and teachers the ability and efficiency of the student to prepare a program of lessons and exams, and their belief that this is the responsibility of the principal and the teacher. Also, it may be, because of some teachers considered the participation of students detract from their role, in spite of all the developments that the Ministry of Education to convince teachers and principals of the need to involve students in all aspects of the educational process.

With regard to the field of justice and equality which came in ranked first in the role of administration in applying the regulations and instructions to students without discrimination. This may be attributed to the efforts of the Ministry of Education to raise the efficiency of principals and develop their skills, especially communication skills and dealing with students and teachers.

The results highlight the role of teachers in monitoring students' performance fairly and without discrimination, and teachers adopt the values of justice and equality while working at the school. This may be attributed to the teacher acquiring a high degree of competence, knowledge and qualification, and that the teacher understands the concept of democratic principles.

### **Discussion of the results of the second question**

The results show that there were no statistically significant differences in the degree of practicing administration based on the foundations of democracy in Al Karak public schools attributed to gender, experience, scientific qualification, and school level. This result is attributed to women becoming involved with men in the field of educational administration. In addition, the Ministry of Education has held training courses and academic lectures and workshops for both male and female teachers. Also, the Ministry of Education held development programs and training to school administrators regardless of their gender, qualification, and experience.

As for scientific qualification, the results show that there were no statistically significant differences ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) for practicing democracy in schools. This may be due to the lack of focus on democracy in the undergraduate or graduate curricula, including the democracy foundation. There is a gap between what is taught and what is actually applied in educational institutions.

For the school level, the results show that there were no statistically significant differences ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) for practicing of democracy in schools. This may be due to the fact that the Ministry of Education has adopted a package

of projects for secondary and primary schools, which led to the removal of differences between them.

With regard to the experience, the results also indicate that there are no substantial statistical differences ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in how principals utilize democratic practices. This could be explained by the fact that the Ministry of Education has been interested in educating and training principals of public schools and has held workshops and meetings, regardless of their experience.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

The most notable findings of the study:

1 - The most practiced democratic behaviors are related to the field of justice, equality, and the least related to the field of freedom of expression and opinion.

2 - The behaviors related to students' involvement in decision-making were the least practiced.

4 - In general, the degree of the administration building on the foundations of democracy in public schools in Karak is medium.

5 – There were no significant differences at the level of significance ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) attributed to gender, qualification, and job experience, and school level.

In light of the findings of this study, the researchers recommend the following:

1 – Guide school principals to apply the democratic administration.

2- Hold training sessions and workshops for them about administration based on the foundations of democracy.

3 – Conduct more studies regarding the application of administration based on the foundation of democracy.

3 - The Ministry of Education needs to hold administrators and schools accountable for implementing the foundations of democracy.

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