

TRANSFORMING LEADERSHIP IN THE ARAB REGION: EMERGING PEDAGOGIES FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

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Public administration (PA) training is crucial for equipping government employees with the competencies needed to address evolving challenges. However, existing PA training frameworks often lack adaptability to contemporary governance demands, particularly in the Middle Eastern and Arabic contexts. This study aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for enhancing PA training by examining key frameworks: Traditional PA, new PA, and new public governance. To address existing gaps and using qualitative approaches based on secondary data, the study introduces the wise leadership framework, which emphasizes intellectual shrewdness, spurring action, moral conduct, and cultivating humility. By employing a quantitative methodology, the research analyzes literature, reports, and analyses to evaluate PA education and leadership development programs. The findings highlight the need for a culturally tailored curriculum, continuous leadership development, and policy reforms to modernize governance training. Given the rapid political, economic, and social transformations in the Arab region, particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, modernizing leadership education is essential. The study concludes that integrating wise leadership principles into PA training can enhance governance effectiveness. Future research should explore the practical applications of wise leadership to promote sustainable development and regional stability.

Keywords: Public Administration Training, Wise Leadership Framework, Public Governance, Arabic Countries, Leadership Education Modernization

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1. INTRODUCTION

The countries in the Arab region, or the region as a whole, are currently undergoing dramatic political, economic, social, and technological changes. Politically, the reverberations from the Arab Spring, coupled with ongoing geopolitical tensions, have led to significant overhauls in government structures. Some countries are now seeking political reforms,

navigating a complex blend of democratization and authoritarianism. In the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which has traditionally been home to monarchies, the trend is to find a balance between traditional governance and economic diversification, along with new social reforms, such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE Vision 2021. On the economic front, GCC nations are diversifying away from their historical dependence on oil.

Investments in sectors such as tourism, technology, and renewable energy are driving growth and employment generation (International Monetary Fund, 2023).

Demographically, social changes are also significant. Urbanization empowers youth through education, while the realization of women's rights is becoming increasingly evident, thanks to legislative reforms and their greater participation in various sectors. These modernization efforts, rooted in diverse cultural norms, contribute to an improved quality of life, which in turn attracts global talent. Technologically, the Arab region is advancing in its pursuit of digital transformation, building innovation hubs and smart cities to draw global startups and skilled professionals (Yassin & El Nahrawy, 2023). Geopolitically, regional complexities persist, particularly in the rivalries between Iran and Saudi Arabia, as well as the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian issue. In response, GCC nations engage in collective diplomacy, which is reflected in recent resolutions aimed at easing tensions and maintaining stability (Haghirian, 2024).

Wise leadership is about bringing foresight, empathy, and strategic decision-making together to lead organizations and societies toward long-term, sustainable success. With a focus on long-term vision and proactive planning, wise leaders anticipate future trends and adapt their strategies accordingly (Awashreh & Al Ghunaimi, 2024; Amrop, 2017). They empower collaboration that values diversity, fosters innovation within teams, and delivers on aspirations. Acting with empathy and ethical integrity, they consider the broader impact fairly and transparently, holding themselves accountable to build trust among various stakeholders and society at large (Bourke & Titus, 2019). Moreover, wise leaders inspire resilience and adaptability by continuously learning and developing, preparing their organizations for uncertain times while also seizing emerging opportunities (Abdul, 2023). Ultimately, wise leadership entails ethical stewardship, enhancing the welfare of organizations and society through prudent decision-making and a forward-thinking vision that creates a lasting legacy of impact and growth. The new leadership development program (LDP) unites both present and future leaders in a campaign focused on training authentic leaders, rather than simply creating subordinates (Awashreh & Mohamed, 2024).

This paper critically reviews LDPs, focusing on key elements aimed at training, nurturing, and developing inspiring leaders rather than followers. It emphasizes important psychological personality traits such as independence, objectivity, and the ability to resolve conflicts. The paper argues that the program should incorporate as many components as possible, tailored to individual needs, to ensure that the delivery methodology is diversified (Woods et al., 2019). This approach would lead to comprehensive leadership development across political, community, and governmental organizations. In addition to consolidating scattered LDP literature, the paper provides a conceptual framework that connects leadership learning at both collective and individual levels, using tools such as lectures, workshops, mentoring, and practical situations (Awashreh & Al Naqbi, 2024). In addition, the research problem focuses on addressing the leadership challenges in the Arab region. This paper seeks to explore and identify emerging

pedagogies for teaching and training in public administration (PA) and policy (Zahran et al., 2016). The objective is to provide insights into emerging trends and best practices for enhancing the skill sets of government employees, enabling them to tackle contemporary societal challenges while promoting resilience and adaptability in public service delivery.

Currently, management in the region often operates within a framework that prioritizes giving directives without prior consideration of their broader implications and without consulting lower-level managers or employees. This approach typically results in managerial practices that reflect the personal concerns of top management rather than the collective needs and perspectives of all employees (Klein et al., 2023). Consequently, the new leadership styles to be implemented by public sector leaders must be sensitive to the interests of both current and future generations, fostering participation from all levels of the organization. Only by adopting a multifaceted perspective can we fully understand the dynamics of leadership and organizational development, ultimately contributing to more effective governance (Gandhi, 2022).

The key objective of this research is to examine how the teaching and training programs in PA and policy can be redesigned to equip government employees with the relevant competencies that enable effective governance in the context of a fast-changing environment. To this end, the research will endeavor to explore emerging leadership styles and training approaches that enable inclusive decision-making and support organizational practices beneficial both to the employees and the wider public. The paper provides a framework for leadership training, rooted in the approach or theory of wise leadership. The following are the main research questions addressed in the research:

RQ1: What components would suit a proposed framework for public administration, government in the Arab region or countries?

RQ2: What are the most crucial competencies that government employees should build to respond to global challenges like climate change or social inequality?

RQ3: How can the structure of the training programs encourage lifelong learning and continuous professional development of public servants?

The paper aims to provide practical recommendations for designing and implementing an efficient framework for training in wise leadership that is tailored to the region's needs, with the ultimate goal of enhancing government efficiency and responsiveness.

By the end of this research, it is expected that the challenges and opportunities of wise leadership in PA and policy will be more precisely understood, particularly in the context of the Middle East, with a focus on GCC countries.

The study begins with Section 1, where its goals and research questions are outlined, followed by Section 2, a review of the literature on public administration, leadership, and wise leadership. Section 3 details the methodology employed, which follows a quantitative approach. Section 4 provides the results and proposes a framework for leadership training in public administration. Section 5 discusses the research results. Section 6 examines the implications, applications, and recommendations and concludes the paper.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Public administration review

Public administration (PA) in the Middle East and Arab countries has long been shaped by historical, cultural, and socio-political factors, including colonial legacies, centralized governance, and traditional bureaucratic models (Kay, 2024). In light of rapid changes driven by globalization, technological advancements, and shifting political dynamics, there is a pressing need to overhaul PA practices to meet contemporary demands. Traditional hierarchical, top-down frameworks with limited public participation are under increasing strain (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Moreover, challenges such as pervasive corruption, political instability, and the critical need for economic diversification away from oil dependence underscore the urgency of implementing new frameworks that address current issues more effectively (Matallah, 2020).

The existing PA theories, largely derived from Western models, often fail to consider the unique socio-cultural and political context of the Arab region. For example, while the new public management (NPM) approach's emphasis on efficiency and market-driven reforms is misaligned with the region's governance traditions, Weberian bureaucracy lacks the adaptability needed in rapidly changing environments (Lapuente & Van de Walle, 2020). Consequently, scholars advocate for the development of locally relevant theories that incorporate traditional governance structures and promote greater public participation through more inclusive governance models. The integration of digital technologies into administrative processes is also suggested to modernize operations and improve service delivery (David et al., 2023).

Recent literature has proposed several innovative frameworks to address these shortcomings. For instance, adaptive governance models, which focus on flexibility and resilience, are seen as well-suited to manage the dynamic challenges in the region (Shah et al., 2024). To ensure their practical implementation, these models must be tailored to local contexts by fostering collaboration between government entities and civil society. This could involve creating platforms for citizen participation that are culturally and politically appropriate, ensuring that governance structures are responsive to shifting societal needs.

Additionally, hybrid approaches that blend traditional bureaucratic models with modern participatory and market-oriented strategies are recommended to leverage existing strengths while addressing current challenges (Krupa & Hájek, 2024). This fusion could promote a balance between stability and adaptability, allowing PA systems to respond effectively to both ongoing needs and unforeseen changes. Similarly, public value theory, which prioritizes creating value aligned with citizens' needs rather than mere efficiency, offers a promising avenue for enhancing PA in the region (Naidoo & Holtzhausen, 2020). In practice, this could involve ensuring that public services are designed with input from diverse community stakeholders, thereby fostering a stronger connection between government actions and the needs of the public. As the region continues to evolve, these emerging models emphasize the need for a reevaluation of PA theories and practices. It is crucial that future research focuses on developing and empirically

testing these new models to ensure their effectiveness in addressing the unique challenges of the Arab context (Chiu, 2024). Additionally, PA systems must prioritize adaptability, resilience, and responsiveness to create more effective and inclusive governance frameworks. A critical next step will be to implement adaptive governance and public value theory in culturally appropriate ways, ensuring their relevance and success in addressing the complex challenges facing Middle Eastern and Arab countries today (Bhuiyan, 2023).

2.2. Leadership in Arab countries

Leadership in the Middle East and the Arab region, including GCC countries, is influenced by a complex interplay of historical, socio-cultural, and political factors. This literature review synthesizes key research on the challenges facing leadership in the region, particularly regarding hierarchical structures, political instability, corruption, and the urgent need for modern leadership practices to address these challenges effectively (Durugbo et al., 2020).

Traditional leadership models in Arab regions, shaped by colonial legacies and older governance structures, tend to emphasize top-down control and bureaucratic inefficiencies. These hierarchical models often stifle innovation and hinder participatory governance, as decision-making power remains concentrated in the hands of a few leaders, distancing them from the workforce. Despite rapid economic and social changes, these structures persist in GCC countries, illustrating a gap between traditional leadership practices and the need for more modern approaches (Mishrif & Al Balushi, 2016). For example, in Saudi Arabia, although efforts have been made to modernize leadership through initiatives such as Vision 2030, the deeply rooted hierarchical governance structures often slow down the implementation of these reforms.

Political instability in other parts of the Middle East remains a significant obstacle to leadership effectiveness, with frequent disruptions to administrative processes and challenges in strategic policy implementation. In contrast, GCC countries, while generally more stable, still experience challenges related to the concentration of power within ruling families and a lack of political pluralism. These factors often obstruct leadership reforms and hinder the ability to address the needs of the population (Darwish, 2019). A notable example of this is the leadership transition in the UAE, which has focused on ensuring smooth succession, but the continued concentration of power in certain political families can slow the introduction of modern governance practices.

Corruption remains a pervasive issue in the Arab region, impacting both the public and private sectors. This issue undermines trust in leadership, hampers good governance, and reduces organizational effectiveness. In the GCC, despite ongoing efforts to combat corruption, it persists, particularly in sectors with strong state interests (Rahman et al., 2020). For instance, the UAE has made significant strides in anti-corruption measures through legal reforms and transparency initiatives, yet challenges remain in sectors such as construction and real estate, where state interests are heavily involved.

The GCC countries' drive for economic diversification away from oil dependence further intensifies the need for responsive and adaptive

leadership. Leaders must navigate complex economic transformations, make strategic decisions, and foster innovation. However, traditional leadership models, which are often rigid and lack responsiveness, are ill-suited to meet these demands (Brady & Spence, 2010). In Qatar, for example, the government's emphasis on economic diversification through the National Vision 2030 is hindered by the challenges of balancing traditional leadership structures with the need for flexibility and innovation in the private sector (Al-Sulaiti et al., 2024).

In light of these challenges, there is a growing desire for new leadership practices that are sensitive to local cultures and social norms. Modern leadership models, such as participatory governance and the integration of digital technologies, can enhance citizen involvement and accountability. Addressing issues like traditional hierarchies, political instability, corruption, and economic diversification requires leaders to embrace contemporary practices that are rooted in contextual understanding. Therefore, future research should explore how such leadership practices can be implemented in a way that respects the unique socio-political dynamics of the region and improves overall leadership effectiveness (Anderson, 2018).

2.3. Leadership development and training

The significance of leadership development programs (LDPs) and leadership training for effective governance and public sector reform in Middle Eastern and Arab countries is widely recognized. With rapid socio-economic changes in these countries, cultivating leadership competencies to address contemporary challenges and enhance organizational effectiveness is crucial (Awashreh, 2020). This literature review explores key research on LDP and training in the region, including prevailing practices, emerging challenges, and trends.

Historically, the LDP in Arab countries has been shaped by traditional practices and centralized governance structures. Leadership training programs in the region have traditionally adhered to hierarchical models, focusing on top-down approaches and formal procedures (Kamali et al., 2015). As a result, these models emphasized technical skills and administrative competencies, with limited focus on leadership qualities such as innovation, strategic thinking, and emotional intelligence (Awashreh & Mohamed, 2024).

Recently, there has been a shift toward more contemporary LDP styles. Al-Dabbagh and Assaad (2010) note that many governments in the GCC and broader Middle East have begun adopting training programs that incorporate region-specific leadership competencies. This shift indicates that leaders must now be equipped to navigate dynamic environments, incorporating strategic management, change, and innovation (World Economic Forum, 2017). Thus, leadership training in the region is evolving from traditional bureaucratic models to more adaptive, contemporary approaches (Mameli, 2013), aligning with the region's unique challenges and opportunities.

However, various challenges remain in leadership development in the region. One major issue is the reliance on Western LDP models, which often conflict with local cultural and socio-political contexts. Western approaches, like NPM, struggle to address the specific needs of governance systems in the Arab region and do not align well with traditional values (Stroińska, 2020; Gutterman, 2023). Another

challenge is the limited focus on soft skills essential for governance. Traditional training has often emphasized technical and administrative skills at the expense of leadership competencies like emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and team-building. This gap can result in leaders who, while technically proficient, lack the interpersonal skills needed for effective leadership in diverse environments (Abujbara & Worley, 2018).

On the positive side, emerging trends in LDP in the region are addressing these challenges. Researchers highlight the importance of integrating local governance traditions and values into the LDP. Participatory and inclusive training approaches are gaining traction, involving stakeholders at all levels and fostering cooperation. Additionally, digital technologies, such as online platforms and simulation tools, are enhancing flexibility in training solutions (Kittichat, 2024). Notably, LDP initiatives in the Middle East, like the UAE's Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Program and Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, focus on modern leadership practices tailored to the local context. As these trends evolve, further research and innovation are vital for developing effective leadership competencies and improving governance in the region (Deloitte, 2019).

2.4. Wise leadership in the light Arab region

Wise leadership has garnered significant attention among thinkers within the Middle East. This review aims to revisit how wise leadership is defined and contextualized within the unique cultural, political, and economic landscape of the region (McKenna & Rooney, 2019). According to Scharmer (2008), wise leadership is characterized by a deep understanding on two levels: the immediate context and long-term consequences, with a commitment to ethical outcomes. This concept aligns well with transformative leadership theories, which focus on guiding organizations through complex environments and effecting positive change (Awashreh & Al Ghunaimi, 2024; Scharmer, 2008). In the context of the Arab region, wise leadership must address the complex interplay of social norms, political realities, and economic challenges. Therefore, it is essential to integrate emotional intelligence, strategic vision, and ethical behavior (Caldwell et al., 2012).

At the cultural level, the region's strong orientation toward authority, family, and community values necessitates that leaders balance traditional norms with modern governance approaches. As such, wise leaders must be both personally and communally responsive and responsible, reflecting individual moral values while also meeting collective societal expectations (Awashreh & Hamid, 2024). Politically, leaders operate within centralized systems that concentrate decision-making power, affecting their political maneuverability and the likelihood of maintaining stability. Economically, the region's dependence on oil and the push toward diversification require leaders who can manage economic volatility, foster innovation, and align long-term strategic planning with short-term needs (Azenha et al., 2021). Despite these challenges, wise leadership that fosters positive change and resilience remains possible. Its potential is likely to increase with the ongoing evolution of LDPs in the region. Consequently, future research should focus on exploring how wise leadership can be successfully applied across various contexts within the Middle East, providing valuable insights for both scholars and practitioners.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design, utilizing primarily secondary sources to evaluate PA education and training. The research begins with a literature review to explore existing scholarly works and best practices, offering insights into current trends and identifying gaps in PA training. Additionally, the study will examine case studies from leading training programs and centers worldwide to understand their methods, outcomes, and impact (Ghanad, 2023).

In the literature review, secondary data collected from books, scholarly articles, reports, and peer-reviewed journal articles will be thoroughly analyzed to identify gaps and limitations in the existing LDP framework adopted mainly from Awashreh and Sayyad (2023) and Awashreh and Hamid (2024). The analysis will critically assess the current structure and effectiveness of LDPs, highlighting key shortcomings and proposing theoretical improvements. This framework will focus on addressing specific challenges and offering targeted strategies to refine and enhance LDPs, with a particular emphasis on aligning them with the unique needs and context of the region. The goal is to develop actionable recommendations that can strengthen leadership development efforts and foster more effective governance.

Drawing from the authors' expertise, the findings will be contextualized to ensure their relevance to the specific needs of the Middle East and Arab countries. The study aims to synthesize data from secondary sources to develop evidence-based recommendations for redesigning PA education and training. The goal is to present these recommendations in a manner that emphasizes their significance for policy and practice, highlighting core competencies and effective training strategies that can enhance the development of resilient and adaptive public service delivery systems.

Ultimately, this research seeks to provide valuable insights for decision-makers, educators, and practitioners. By equipping government employees with the necessary skills, the study aims to help them navigate and lead effectively amidst evolving challenges, thereby strengthening public service capabilities in the region.

4. RESULTS

Traditional PA, grounded in Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy, promotes a formal hierarchical structure characterized by its rigidity and sluggishness in adapting to rapid changes. This

structure consolidates control within a limited group of individuals, creating a governance system that is often inefficient and resistant to reform. In response, the new PA model emerged in the 1980s, incorporating private sector practices to address these inefficiencies. This model focuses on enhancing efficiency and competitiveness by aligning public sector practices with those of the private sector, ultimately leading to a situation where the private sector exerts significant influence over PA (Vignieri, 2020). The involvement of politicians and businessmen in both politics and business has become increasingly apparent, further consolidating control.

The advent of new public governance around 2000 introduced a shift towards networks and collaborative partnerships, emphasizing stakeholder participation in PA. This approach aimed to mitigate the shortcomings of earlier models but has also inadvertently strengthened the grip of private interests over public sector operations (Indahsari & Raharja, 2020). In light of these developments, the suggested framework emphasizes the need for enhancing individual self-awareness and insight among public officials. This approach is essential for fostering critical evaluation of existing plans and theories (Cantarelli et al., 2023). The current PA theories, particularly in the Arab region, fall short of addressing the interests of both present and future generations. Governments in this region are often controlled by a small number of individuals driven by personal interests. Thus, there is a pressing need to move away from these controlling dynamics and promote individual beliefs and self-awareness. This shift is crucial for safeguarding the interests of current and future generations and overcoming blind obedience. Achieving this requires a concerted effort to enhance knowledge, skills, and promote freedom of speech, expression, and action (Florida Institute of Technology, n.d.).

The proposed framework for wise leadership encompasses four key dimensions: intellectual shrewdness, spurring action, moral conduct, and humility. These dimensions are designed to enhance employees' beliefs and awareness, thereby fostering deeper self-awareness and effective leadership. By integrating these elements, the framework aims to address the limitations of traditional and contemporary PA models, ultimately contributing to more effective and responsive governance. Table 1 presents dimensions of wise leadership with explanations relevant to PA, focusing on intellectual shrewdness, spurring action, moral conduct, and cultivating humility for effective governance and accountability.

Table 1. Dimensions of wise leadership and their relevance to public administration

<i>Wise leadership dimensions</i>	<i>Explanations of meaning, connecting to PA</i>
intellectual shrewdness	Intellectual shrewdness involves sharp judgment and insightful analysis in complex situations, enabling effective decision-making. It combines astute perception, deep understanding, and strategic thinking for enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving in a way that ensures implementation of the vision, governance, accountability, and the interest of current and future generations (Awashreh & Hamid, 2024; Awashreh, 2013).
Spurring action	Work motivation is the aspect of inspiring and mobilizing subordinates about the shared vision, strategy, and agreed-upon activities in PA, aimed at benefiting current and future generations alike. It is viewed as the most paramount factor behind effective leadership (Awashreh & Hamid, 2024; Christensen & Læg Reid, 2011).
Moral conduct	Moral behavior involves actions that impact others positively or negatively, guided by the social norm of social responsibility. This norm includes two obligations: acting altruistically (positively) and avoiding antisocial (negative) actions (Awashreh & Hamid, 2024; FeldmanHall et al., 2018).
Cultivating humility	Developing humility involves fostering a culture where humility is valued, recognizing that true greatness lies in simplicity and modesty. This approach positively impacts individuals, followers, and society (Nielsen & Marrone, 2018).

Source: Adopted from Awashreh and Hamid (2024).

Table 2 outlines the key pillars of leadership training, covering objectivity, contradictions, and independence. It explores cognitive and skills frameworks, emotional intelligence, and the necessity of self-awareness for effective leadership.

Table 2. Key pillars, components, and fields of leadership training

<i>Key pillars</i>	<i>Description</i>
Objectivity	The training manual did not show that, but the school's reports praised the experience of the Palestinian Authority, and there was talk of qualitative developments that took place in the past period. The experience of leadership preparation programs was praised by the school's public relations reports.
Contradictions	The manual of the training program for the Palestinian National School did not indicate whether the program combines contradictions, between contradictory and diverse knowledge and experiences, and experiences from multiple sides; Theoretical subjects such as (team building, management and leadership, finance, public relations, planning, financial policies, economic indicators, writing reports, ..., and languages) do not explain anything. However, the speakers who were hosted in the programs all follow the same approach, meaning there is no combining of contradictions.
Independence	The programs have not been clarified if their contents, nature, and implementation nature are independent, in the sense that they contribute to the consolidation of an independent personality. However, depending on personal experience and expertise in dealing with Palestinian institutions, they are usually advocacy aimed at shaping the personality of the referred as desired and not allowing the trainee to build an independent awareness and an independent leadership personality.
<i>Components and fields</i>	<i>Description</i>
Cognitive framework	Understanding human behavior and decision-making processes is crucial. A system dynamics model incorporates knowledge from social psychological theories, aligning with economic, empirical, and historical data. These theories can be mathematically expressed and verified (Schlüter et al., 2017).
Skills framework	Skills refer to life skills, social skills, job skills, technical skills, educational skills, and thinking skills, all skills needed by the person (Robles, 2012)
Subjective and emotional intelligence	Emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to understand and manage his or her emotions, as well as recognize and influence the emotions of those around them (Landry, 2019).
Beyond knowledge	Information alone is not enough, and knowledge alone does not lead to positive change. Rather, what is required is what lies beyond knowledge to create a network of solid self-awareness that turns into change (Fairbanks et al., 2010).

Source: Adopted from Awashreh and Sayyad (2023).

Table 3 is a combined wise leadership framework derived from Tables 1 and 2. You can organize your content into three main areas of focus, as outlined in the table and categories, to build a structured training program. These key areas include intellectual shrewdness, spurring action, and moral conduct, each of which can be further expanded into specific modules that address particular skills or knowledge. The following approach provides a structured pathway for course

design. Specifically, the first area targets the development of intellectual shrewdness, equipping farmers with critical thinking skills and training in strategic problem-solving. Table 3 serves as a roadmap, guiding the implementation of a comprehensive training program designed to improve farm management practices. This program combines cognitive skills, emotional intelligence, ethical conduct, and practical application to create a well-rounded approach to leadership development.

Table 3. Roadmap for enhancing farm management through comprehensive training

<i>Category</i>	<i>Details</i>
Modules	
Cognitive framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding critical thinking and applying it in farm management; Problem solving in common farm challenges.
Beyond knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision making under uncertainty; Improving intuition and the development of foresight for better planning.
Personal and emotional intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing immunity to pressure and stressors; Interpersonal skills; Development to motivate and lead farm teams.
Ethical conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making ethical choices in farm activities; More humane labor practices: awareness and practice.
Relatedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning from errors and feedback; Creating empathy and regard in workplace relations.
Training activities	
Cognitive framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case study based on farm situations requiring strategic decision making; Workshop on problem-solving techniques in farmwork.
Beyond knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role-play activities on setting goals and monitoring achievements; Case role plays on leadership and team motivation.
Personal and emotional intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role-play activities on setting goals and monitoring achievements; Case role plays on leadership and team motivation.
Ethical conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies on ethical dilemmas; Reflection for humanity and self-awareness.
Training delivery methods	
Workshops and seminars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For live interaction and group discussion;
Online modules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-managed learning of theoretical concepts;
On-the-job training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application of skills and knowledge in a real farm setting;
Mentoring and coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personalized guidance and feedback.
Evaluation and feedback	
Ongoing quizzes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quizzes and practical tests to assess comprehension;
Feedback sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodic review to track progress and identify areas for improvement;
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain participant feedback to customize the training program.

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Table 3 serves as a roadmap for implementing a well-rounded training program aimed at improving farm management practices through a blend of cognitive skills, emotional intelligence, ethical conduct, and practical application. It shows training program overview encompasses modules on cognitive frameworks, critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making. It includes personal intelligence, ethical conduct, and training activities such as workshops, online modules, and feedback evaluations.

5. DISCUSSION

The proposed leadership reforms aim to enhance governance, strategic adaptability, and institutional resilience, ultimately improving leadership effectiveness, organizational performance, and employee engagement. The literature on leadership in the Arab region highlights the intricate interplay between political, economic, social, and technological transformations. As Arab nations navigate the challenges of economic diversification, technological advancement, and social reform, traditional governance structures must evolve to meet the demands of an increasingly complex landscape. This paper examines the evolving leadership needs in the region, particularly within PA and policy, and explores how the principles of wise leadership—characterized by foresight, empathy, ethical decision-making, and strategic thinking—can address governance challenges.

The political landscape of GCC countries has been shaped by the aftermath of the Arab Spring and ongoing geopolitical tensions, necessitating adaptive and forward-thinking leadership. Political shifts, economic diversification initiatives (e.g., Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and UAE Vision 2021), and social reforms (particularly regarding women's rights and youth empowerment) have created opportunities for transformative leadership. However, centralized governance structures and hierarchical models often hinder innovation, participatory decision-making, and institutional flexibility. As PA systems in the region seek to transition toward models such as new public governance and adaptive governance, the demand for strategic and inclusive leadership has become increasingly evident (Lapuente & Van de Walle, 2020; Krupa & Hájek, 2024). The integration of wise leadership principles can facilitate this transition by equipping leaders with the tools necessary to navigate uncertainty, balance authority with collaboration, and promote ethical governance.

Wise leadership, as conceptualized in contemporary leadership scholarship, blends emotional intelligence, strategic vision, and ethical conduct. This leadership paradigm is particularly relevant in the Arab region, where hierarchical governance structures and top-down decision-making have traditionally dominated PA. Scholars argue that the ability to integrate private-sector efficiencies, technological innovation, and participatory governance models is essential for modern leadership (Durugbo et al., 2020; Anderson, 2018). While Western models of PA, such as NPM and Weberian bureaucracy, have influenced governance in the region, they are increasingly viewed as inadequate in addressing the socio-political complexities of GCC countries (Lapuente & Van de Walle, 2020). Emerging frameworks, such as adaptive governance and hybrid models, incorporate participatory governance and digital transformation,

yet their implementation remains constrained by traditional governance practices (Shah et al., 2024; Krupa & Hájek, 2024). This study underscores the importance of a governance model that not only integrates these evolving frameworks but also aligns with the cultural and social dynamics unique to the Arab region.

To build leadership capacity in the region, the paper advocates for comprehensive LDPs that emphasize emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and strategic foresight. Research indicates that existing LDPs in the region often fall short in these areas, particularly in fostering soft skills and aligning leadership practices with local governance traditions (Caldwell et al., 2012; Scharmer, 2008). Additionally, there is a clear gap in LDPs that prioritize independence, objectivity, and conflict resolution (Kirchner & Akdere, 2014). The proposed framework for wise leadership incorporates intellectual shrewdness, strategic action, moral conduct, and humility combined with emotional intelligence. Intellectual shrewdness enables leaders to assess complex challenges and devise innovative solutions, while strategic action ensures the implementation of long-term vision with organizational agility. Moral conduct upholds ethical standards and accountability in governance, and humility, combined with emotional intelligence, balances authority with empathy and inclusivity.

Wise leadership principles extend beyond PA to sectors like business, education, and agriculture. Ethical decision-making, strategic collaboration, and participatory governance are key in all contexts. The study emphasizes the potential of leadership frameworks to improve efficiency and decision-making across industries. While the Arab region has made significant progress in PA, challenges such as political instability, hierarchical structures, and economic diversification remain. Integrating wise leadership—focused on foresight, ethics, and emotional intelligence—can address these challenges, fostering adaptive, inclusive governance. Leadership training that emphasizes these principles can help Arab nations navigate governance complexities, ensuring sustainable development and institutional resilience.

6. CONCLUSION

Addressing leadership deficiencies in the Arab public sector requires a shift to new leadership styles and training frameworks. This transformation can improve governance, organizational performance, and employee engagement, thus preparing leaders to navigate evolving PA challenges. Moreover, as global pressures like climate change and social equity influence policy, Arab governments must rethink leadership development.

In this context, this paper advocates for research into teaching methods that foster wise leadership—ethics, resilience, and inclusivity—particularly in Arab and GCC regions. By integrating these principles into PA education, leaders can be better prepared for complex challenges, ultimately promoting ethical governance and improved public service. Furthermore, the proposed leadership system aims to enhance governance quality and responsiveness by adopting inclusive decision-making for current and future generations. As a result, this shift will improve decision-making and organizational effectiveness, thereby boosting employee engagement, job satisfaction, and motivation.

To achieve this, a new curriculum, incorporating contemporary leadership theories focused on participative decision-making, should address the region's unique challenges. In addition, widespread implementation of training programs across public sector organizations will foster a cohesive leadership environment. Regularly evaluating, gathering feedback, and introducing mentorship programs will be essential to refining training and ensuring its relevance. Moreover, advocating for policy reforms to support participative governance will empower leaders to

make decisions reflecting community needs. However, while the study highlights the importance of wise leadership in the Arab region, its focus on GCC countries limits generalizability. Thus, expanding the scope and conducting empirical research on leadership development programs will provide a clearer understanding of their long-term impact. Lastly, further research should explore the role of cultural factors, technology, and the broader applicability of wise leadership across sectors like healthcare and education.

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