

# **Challenges to Implement Effective Leadership Theories in the Middle East**

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## **Introduction**

Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2021). Leadership is a key management function that helps to direct an organization's resources toward increased efficiency and the achievement of goals. Effective leaders set clear goals to motivate and guide the organization in achieving its mission. Understanding the role of leaders can help the team to contribute more meaningfully to the accomplishment of the company's objectives (Indeed, 2022).

There are key success factors of leadership such as motivating the employees with economic and non-economic rewards. Guiding subordinates to show them the way they have to perform their work effectively and efficiently. Building morale, morale denotes the willing cooperation of the employees towards their work and getting them into confidence and winning their trust. Building a work environment by personal contact with employees and listening to their problems and solving them.

Leaders should treat employees on humanitarian terms. Coordination can be achieved by reconciling personal interests with organizational goals. (managementstudyguide, 2021). However, each manager has a different style, depending on the situation. Managerial style is a collection of feelings, thinking, and behaviors that a manager utilizes to deal with employees and situations (Peik, 2004).

Leadership is essential to the success of any firm, and this is true in the Middle East as well. However, several issues must be resolved when implementing effective leadership theories in the Middle East.

The study aims to focus on the illustration of leadership styles and compare it with the current situation in the Middle East to identify the gaps and recommend solutions. This study will be illustrated through an introduction, and problem statement. In addition, the background of the study, target audience, and significance of the study followed by a leadership literature review and analysis of major themes, gaps, and recommendations. Then, will end up with the conclusion.

## **Problem Statement**

(Ahmed & Amiri, 2022), confirmed that every organization depends on effective leadership, and various theories have been created to help leaders achieve their objectives. However, cultural diversity, political instability, gender inequality, and resistance to change frequently make it difficult for successful leadership theories to be implemented in the Middle East. These difficulties affect organizational effectiveness and employee happiness, emphasizing the need for more research.

The Middle East presents a considerable barrier to applying successful leadership theories due to cultural variations. (Lambert, Pasha-Zaidi, Passmore, & YorkAl-Karam, 2015; Alefari, Almanei, & Salonitis, 2020; Hassanein & Özgit, 2022) claim that one of the obstacles in the Middle East is cultural diversity, which can lead to conflicts and make managing a multicultural workforce challenging. This issue needs to be addressed by different types of leadership.

According to (Olson, 2020), the key issue in the Middle East is political instability, which can affect productivity and employee happiness. For instance, the recent violence in Syria has significantly increased volatility in the area, which makes it challenging for organizations to function. Leaders must control uncertainty and establish a stable atmosphere for their organizations to succeed. Inaction could lead to lower staff morale and higher turnover rates.

(Hiyari, 2020) argued that the obstacle to effective leadership implementation in the Middle East is resistance to change. For instance, cultural and religious values greatly impact how people in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) view change. It can be difficult for executives to implement new plans or initiatives since many workers prefer the status quo over change. By fostering a culture of creativity and collaboration and giving staff members the tools and resources, they need to adapt to change, leaders must be able to overcome this issue.

Finally, a major obstacle to effective leadership implementation in the Middle East is gender inequality. For instance, the number of women in senior positions in Emirati companies was 8.9% in the UAE (Atalayar, 2022), in Kuwait, women are underrepresented in leadership positions due to cultural norms and legal barriers (FALK, 2015), which can affect their motivation and job satisfaction. In Addition, gender norms are deeply ingrained in society, which may impact the proportion of women willing to hold leadership positions. Leaders must encourage diversity and inclusion in their businesses to address how this lack may affect organizational performance and employee satisfaction.

## **Background of the Study**

The Background of the paper is that the implementation challenges of leadership theories are a focal point in the Middle East. This heavy focus on implementation challenges of leadership is due to the Middle East having unique circumstances. The Middle East is a heterogeneous region, with no single nationality that can be considered representative of the entire region. The population of the Middle East is composed of individuals from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and their national identity may vary depending on their country of origin. Among the most

commonly recognized nationalities in the region are Arabs, Persians, Turks, and Kurds, among others.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) consists of 20 countries located in West Asia and North Africa. These countries are known for their diverse cultures, rich histories, and unique landscapes. The term "Middle Eastern" refers to the geographic region that spans parts of Western Asia and North Africa, while the term "Arab" typically describes individuals who speak Arabic as their first language and who originate from countries such as Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, and the Arabian Peninsula.

Despite the significant Arab presence in the region, it's important to note that not all individuals in the Middle East are Arab. The region is home to a variety of ethnic and cultural groups, including Persian, Turkish, and Kurdish populations, among others (Infoplease, 2023).

### **Target Audience**

Leaders, managers, and executives from various businesses and sectors are the target audience for debates about Leadership in the Middle East. Government officials, company executives, entrepreneurs, and non-profit executives fall under this category.

(Budhwar, Pereira, Mellahi, & Singh, 2019) argue that leaders must comprehend the particular cultural context in which they operate, particularly in the Middle East, where cultural norms and practices differ greatly. These dialogues help CEOs navigate the difficulties of running regional firms since HR experts, consultants, and academics with local knowledge can offer advice and assistance.

Discussions about successful Leadership can help policymakers and practitioners who support regional economic growth and development. (Alefari, Almani, & Salonitis, 2020) confirmed that understanding the difficulties faced by leaders of firms in the Middle can assist business executives and entrepreneurs in making better-educated choices regarding business strategy, management techniques, and talent development.

Furthermore, conversations about successful Leadership in the Middle East can support increased accountability, transparency, and good governance. According to (Behery, Al-Nasser, Jabeen, & Rawas, 2018) leaders may build more secure and predictable business environments that attract investment, innovation, and growth by encouraging moral and responsible leadership. Promoting excellent governance can aid in luring foreign investment, generating employment, and fostering economic growth for government officials.

### **Significance of the Study**

The insights this study offers on the challenges of leadership in the Middle East are one of its most important contributions. The study demonstrates that to succeed in the Middle East, CEOs must be culturally aware and adaptable by addressing the region's political environment and diverse cultures. This knowledge can assist leaders in preventing misinterpretations and disputes that may result from various cultural viewpoints, eventually enhancing organizational effectiveness and worker satisfaction.

This study's emphasis is on the effects of political instability on organizational performance and employee happiness is another significant contribution. According to the report, the region's ongoing hostilities have posed serious problems for businesses, causing a reduction in economic activity, population displacement, and a shortage of resources.

The study also highlights how critical dealing with the Middle Eastern opposition to change is. When adopting new technologies and business procedures, resistance to change can be a significant obstacle to implementing successful leadership techniques. Understanding the causes of resistance to change enables leaders to create plans to alleviate these worries and win over their workforce, resulting in adopting new procedures and tools more effectively.

Finally, the study suggests that leaders overcome obstacles by applying successful leadership techniques in the Middle East. For instance, leaders can create more effective and resilient companies by funding education and training initiatives addressing cultural differences and supporting diversity (Hassanein & Özgit, 2022). Additionally, leaders can build a more inclusive workplace that draws and keeps top talent by promoting gender equality and addressing the concerns of underrepresented communities.

## Literature Review

This part, firstly started with the definition of leadership, followed by an explanation of leadership styles and their theoretical framework which elaborates on the impact of three leadership styles (autocratic, transformational, and inclusive) on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and the employees' performance, motivation, inspiration, and productivity.

### Leadership Definition

(Robbins & Judge, 2009) defined leadership as “the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a vision or set of goals”. (Winston, 2006) defined leadership as “ One or more people who select, equips, train, and influence one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives”

Effective leadership styles play a critical role in achieving success by providing guidance, motivation, and inspiration. Effective leaders are capable of creating a shared vision and bringing people together around a common goal. Effective leaders can make sound decisions and solve problems promptly. Without strong leadership, individuals and organizations would struggle to attain their goals. Hence, businesses must have effective leadership to reach their full potential (Siena Heights University, 2022).

### Leader Vs. Manager

Successful organizations require both management and leadership, with managers focusing on systems, processes, and equipment, while leaders focus on visions and people. Anyone can play a

leadership role regardless of their position, but top leadership is crucial for an organization to thrive (BERTOCCI, 2008). The following table compares leaders and managers.

Figure 1 A Comparison of Leaders and Managers

Leaders:	Managers:
Goal oriented	Task oriented
Inspires / Empowers	Directs
Thoughtful	Industrious
Results oriented	Action oriented
Effective	Efficient
Long-term planner	Short-term planner
Policy oriented	Implementation oriented
Mission oriented	Program oriented
Attracts talent	Recruits talent
Works in the future	Works in present
Studies the environment	Observes operations
National / International perspective	Agency perspective
Process oriented	Product oriented
Consults	Consulted
Decides	Recommends
Utilizes staff work	Provides staff work
Mediates	Champions
Focuses on concepts	Focuses on details
Looks outward	Looks inward
Represents entire institution / unit/ agency	Represents separate organizational functions
Sees the whole	Sees parts of the whole
Operates in internal and external politics	Operates in internal politics
Delegates	Oversees

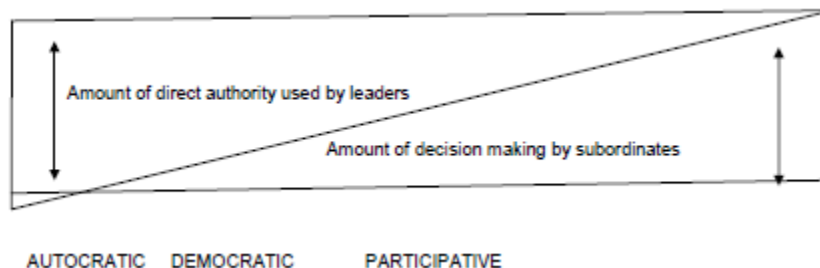
Source: BERTOCCI, D. I. (2008). *Leadership in Organizations: There Is a Difference between Leaders and Managers*. Montclair, Virginia: University Press of America.

## Leadership Theories & Style

### Autocratic, Democratic, and Participative Leadership Styles

(Daniel, 2002) proposed that leadership styles can be described as ranging from autocratic to democratic to participatory to indicate the level of authority and decision-making power of managers and employees.

Figure 2 Daniel's Leadership Style



*Source: Daniel, G. (2002). Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence. Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press.*

The autocratic style is described by an "I tell" philosophy. Autocratic leaders tell their followers what to do. While this can give the company clear direction, it can also cause managers to underestimate the value or ignore contributions from their teams. It is appropriate and valuable in some situations such as when the business is in crisis or when there is an urgent issue that needs to be resolved quickly. However, overuse of authority can lead to demotivating, boring, and short of innovation and creativity in the long run. Autocratic leaders do not greet initiatives and suggestions from their subordinates, limiting communication and socializing in the workplace, which can lead to conflict and disagreement.

The democratic style is described by an "I share" philosophy. Decisions are made within the teams, each team member has an equal voice and opportunities.

Participative approach, all team members identify important goals and develop processes or strategies to achieve those goals. From this perspective, participative leadership can be viewed as a style of leadership that depends heavily on the leader acting as a facilitator rather than simply giving or making orders. This type of engaging leadership style can be used in business settings, volunteer organizations, and even functions at home.

### **Transformational Leadership**

The concept of transformational leadership focuses on motivating and empowering employees by appealing to their moral values and transforming their norms and values. This leadership style promotes communication and participation in making decisions and supports employee development and solving problems. Transformational leadership is seen as an effective approach to organizational change, complex issues, and problems where innovation and creativity are significant. It is characterized by four key elements: charisma, idealized influence, inspirational motives, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Managers who adopt this leadership style can establish credibility and trust among followers, and inspire them toward constant change and organizational value (Kuang, 2018).

### **Inclusive Leadership**

Inclusive leadership is the ability to effectively manage and lead a diverse group of people while respecting their uniqueness in an empathetic and non-judgmental manner. This is true leadership, eliminating discrimination, prejudice, and favoritism based on color, race, and other protected characteristics, and making employees feel valued for their contributions (Northouse, 2021).

Inclusion is a key psychological component that helps organizations reap the benefits of diversity. Inclusive leaders are responsible for creating an environment in which differences can be valued and used to improve strategies, processes, and overall effectiveness. Inclusive leadership must consider both belonging and uniqueness, and the inclusive leadership model highlights the factors that influence inclusive leader behavior and the outcomes of such behavior. Inclusive leadership can be learned and developed and requires changes in the way we think, value, and relate to others.

As the workforce becomes more diverse, inclusive leadership can become a strategy to ensure that the potential benefits of a diverse workforce are realized.

### **Characteristics of Effective Leaders**

They inspire and motivate followers by creating and demonstrating a mission, vision, and values to help guide followers to greatness. Great leaders know how to motivate themselves, motivate others, and lead change (Freshbooks, 2023). Effective leaders value integrity, have good communication skills, have a clear vision, challenge the status quo, rely on intuition, empathize with their team, and remain objective, intelligent, and open-minded. creative, patient, and flexible. Encourage others to see the big picture, put in balance the pros and cons before arriving at a solution, and handle complex situations with ease.

### **Analysis of Major Themes**

It is crucial to include specific examples from the Middle East to demonstrate how the primary themes highlighted in the literature review affect organizational performance and employee happiness.

### **Cultural Differences**

Cultural differences in the Middle East are influenced by multiple factors, including religion, history, geography, politics, ethnicity, and globalization. The dominant religions of the region, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, have shaped cultural practices and identities. Diverse geographies and historical events have contributed to cultural diversity. The unstable political situation has brought about changes in cultural practices and traditions. The region's diverse ethnic groups have influenced each other's cultures, and globalization has introduced new technologies and practices.

Cultural differences might result in misunderstandings and miscommunications, lowering staff morale and reducing productivity (Olson, 2020). Furthermore, it was made clear by a multinational corporation operating in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that a lack of cultural awareness resulted in disputes between workers from various cultural backgrounds, which ultimately caused a high staff turnover rate and a decline in organizational performance.

### **Political Instability and Conflicts**

The Middle East is a region where political instability can pose significant challenges for leaders, making it difficult to govern effectively.

Leaders may have to navigate complicated and ever-changing alliances domestically and internationally, further complicating decision-making.

Economic consequences of political instability, such as stalled or declining economic growth, can lead to increased social unrest and dissatisfaction. For instance, due to the unpredictability and instability brought on by the protests and political turmoil during the 2011 Arab Spring, several businesses in the region saw a fall in sales and a loss of revenue (ElKaleh, 2019).



Political instability is a significant issue that affects company performance and employee satisfaction in the Middle East. Uncertainty can result from the government's and policies' frequent changes, impacting the business climate. For instance, the 2011 Arab Spring significantly disrupted regional enterprises, leading to the closure of several businesses or a scaling back of operations due to the demonstrations and turmoil. Businesses in the Middle East that do business with Qatar have also been hurt by the prolonged embargo of Qatar since 2017, which has led to decreased income and job losses. The armed conflict that is taking place now in Sudan between two factions of the Sudanese army negatively affected all economic, social, and cultural sectors, which led to the emigration of many investors and Sudanese as well from the country. This led to difficulty in planning and managing projects and teamwork due to unstable and unexpected circumstances.

### Resistance to Change

Resistance to change in the Middle East can hinder the implementation of leadership, making it difficult for leaders to accomplish their goals and carry out essential reforms.

Resistance to change hinders the introduction of new policies and programs. It creates obstacles for leaders trying to overcome established interests. Furthermore, it makes it difficult to build consensus and cooperation. In addition, Increased polarization and conflict undermine leaders' ability to work collaboratively towards common objectives.

This is an example from Egypt, according to (Elgohary & Abdelazyz, 2020), Due to a lack of awareness and misunderstanding of the e-government system and its processes, employees in Egyptian government organizations display a high tendency towards resistance to change across all dimensions. This resistance negatively impacts their performance efficiency and effectiveness, as evidenced by moderate performance results.

According to the study done by (ALHUMAIRI, 2017) on UAE, the author identifies 4 factors or reasons for changes: 1) Psychological factors: this is the stress caused by the work environment, e.g., “feeling of loss, threat, doubt, anxiety and worry”. 2) Personal factors: these are related to “identity, attitudes, beliefs, adaptability and trust”. 3) School-culture-related: these refer to the internal environment of the school. The author believes that “norm and value formation, work organization, interpersonal relationship formation, and interpretation of the idea of change and innovation in schools” influence resistance to change. 4) Organizational factors: this is a reference to the support school leaders provide during times of change.

The study done by (Franklin & Aguenza, 2016) in Saudi Telecommunication Company (STC), identified the obstacles to change: 1) Inefficient change management teams. 2) Inadequate management support. 3) Lack of resources and planning. 4) Poor communication.

## Gender Inequality

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is still far from achieving gender equality, as per (World Economic Forum, 2022), Women's participation in the workforce is low at 19%, and only 18% of managerial roles are held by women.

The report of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) written by (Miller, Benson, & Handley, 2016), specifies some barriers for women to hold the leadership position in the Middle East, such as old stereotypes about mothers can negatively affect women pursuing leadership roles. Women leaders are still perceived as masculine. Women may have fewer “connections”, bias and discrimination, and lack of flexibility, such as balancing work and family life can be a challenge that discourages women from taking leadership positions. The workplaces are still modeled after decades-old notions of men’s and women’s domestic roles.

According to (AAUW, 2023), Companies that have equality between men and women in leadership have been found to make 21% more profit than other companies. Gender equality is also important to employee satisfaction and performance. Companies with gender-diverse boards perform better than all-male boards, and having women as decision-makers helps companies better serve female consumers. A diverse workforce can also be a source of innovation.

Gender inequality in the Middle East can impact leadership implementation. Women face barriers to advancement and are underrepresented in leadership positions. Gender inequality limits the pool of potential leaders and diversity in decision-making. Traditional gender roles and expectations can make it difficult for women to be taken seriously as leaders.

A major issue affecting organizational performance and employee satisfaction in the Middle East is gender disparity. Women confront severe impediments to entering employment in many of the countries in the region, and they frequently experience discrimination and harassment. As a result, they have fewer possibilities to develop in their careers, which lessens the variety of those in leadership roles. As an illustration, Saudi Arabia recently allowed women to drive, which was considered a big step toward gender equality. There is still a long way to go to ensure equal chances for women in the workforce.

According to (OECD, 2020), women in the MENA region continue to face barriers to accessing leadership positions in crisis response and recovery efforts for post-COVID.

## Autocratic Leadership

According to (ALNUAIMI, 2013), the leadership style of the Abu Dhabi Police (ADP) was mainly characterized by a dominant top-down approach, which was autocratic, directive, strong, and commanding. This approach focused more on enforcing regulations and rules, rather than strategically implementing changes. Consequently, junior-level employees were not adequately engaged in the change process. Additionally, the blame culture within the organization created fear among leaders to delegate tasks and make decisions. Moreover, the hierarchical structure of the paramilitary organization reinforced this leadership style since ADP is a police force.

Governments and businesses in the Middle East commonly adopt an authoritarian leadership style. This approach is rooted in the belief that employees who value high power distance tend to be more respectful of authority and management decisions, resulting in minimal autonomy in their decision-making process (Abi-Raad, 2019).

In Egypt, companies tend to have highly hierarchical structures, and this is reflected in the prevalent management style. This management approach is often described as "consultative management of authority," which emphasizes the importance of discussion while maintaining perceived status and power. Managers in Egypt typically do not involve their subordinates in decision-making, and once a decision is made, subordinates are expected to comply with it fully, without any criticism or dispute (BINUS, 2017).

## **Findings and Recommendations**

Several ideas can assist leaders in the Middle East to overcome the difficulties highlighted in the literature review and the analysis.

### **Cultural Differences**

A critical competency for leaders in the Middle East is the capacity to lead successfully in a culturally varied context due to growing globalization and cross-border business connections (Bodolica, Spraggon, & Badi, 2021). Leaders need to practice cultural sensitivity in their Leadership by building trust, encouraging cooperation, and fostering innovation are all skilled leaders with the ability to understand cultural differences and modify their leadership styles to suit the demands of diverse teams excel at. Leaders now need to be able to manage and inspire teams across various locations and time zones due to the growth of remote work and virtual teams. Leaders attempting to negotiate these difficult difficulties can benefit from discussions about effective Leadership in the Middle East.

Organizations in the Middle East should implement cultural awareness initiatives to help employees better understand regional cultural nuances and differences. The result is better employee satisfaction and better company performance.

Overall, culture can profoundly influence the implementation of leadership theories. Leaders must be cognizant of cultural differences and adapt their leadership style accordingly to effectively operate in diverse cultural settings.

(Bourke & Espedido, 2019) explained that diverse teams are common in today's companies, but the combination of people alone does not guarantee success. Inclusive leadership is required to ensure that all team members feel respected, valued, and included. their research shows that teams with inclusive leaders directly improve performance. For example, teams with inclusive leaders are 17% more likely to say they are high performers, 20% more likely to say they make quality decisions, and 20% more likely to say they act collaboratively. 29% higher. Additionally, we found that a 10% improvement in his perception of inclusion increased workplace attendance per employee by nearly one day per year and reduced the cost of absenteeism.

## **Political Instability and Conflicts**

Leaders in the Middle East must be aware of the political climate and try to establish a secure environment for their organizations. A multinational corporation operating in the area has implemented a crisis management strategy to deal with potential political upheaval. As a result, there has been an improvement in organizational performance and an uptick in employee satisfaction during periods of political unpredictability (Jayashree & Lindsay, 2016)

According to (Franklin & Aguenza, 2016) in their study on Saudi Telecommunication Company (STC), transformational leadership is the most appropriate leadership style, where transformational change deals effectively with complex and unpredicted outcomes.

## **Resistance to Change**

According to (Franklin & Aguenza, 2016), Causes of resistance to change should be identified and eliminated to make a change process effective. And recommended the following six steps to achieve this include education and communication, participation and involvement, facilitation and support, negotiation and agreement, co-optation and manipulation, and implicit/explicit coercion.

According to (AlDossari, 2016), the most appropriate leadership style for managing change and culture is transformational factors because transformational leaders are more concentrated on culture, strategy, and mission.

(Elgohary & Abdelazyz, 2020), suggested the following to overcome the resistance to change, firstly, organizations must focus on their culture to ensure employee acceptance of the new system and eliminate resistance to change. Secondly, they must introduce implementation processes and provide adequate training programs to increase employee awareness and efficiency. Thirdly, leaders must be trained to manage and eliminate resistance to change, and employees must be included in the change process to help them understand the objectives and implementation mechanism. Fourthly, communications between employees and managers must be improved, and managers must ensure employees have all necessary information. Finally, e-government policy-makers must organize regular meetings with key employees to ensure staff involvement in managing any changes to their workflows.

According to the study in Abu Dhabi Police (ALNUAIMI, 2013), the transformational leadership style is the suitable leadership style to apply to Abu Dhabi Police (ADP) to create a vision that inspired and motivated its employees.

## **Gender Inequality**

Another difficulty is the Middle East's widespread cultural tendency of reluctance to change. Many individuals are cautious of novel concepts and methods, especially if they are thought to conflict with religion or tradition. Because of this, it may be challenging for executives to implement novel ideas or approaches essential to their businesses' expansion and success. For instance, opposition to women in leadership roles exists in some Gulf nations, which reduces the talent pool available to firms and lowers employee morale.

Bodolica et al. (Bodolica, Spraggon, & Badi, 2021) state that leadership can also benefit non-profit leaders as they seek to solve some of the area's most urgent social and environmental problems. In their book they also bring concerns about gender inequality and a lack of resources can influence the efforts made by non-profit groups in the area to advance gender equality, education, and sustainable development.

AAUW, (AAUW, 2023) , suggests that employers can promote gender equality in the workplace. First, regular pay reviews should be conducted to identify and correct pay inequalities based on gender and race. Second, we should abandon the practice of using salary history to set wages and instead use market research to determine the appropriate salary for a particular position. Third, employers should promote salary transparency by including salary grades in job descriptions and by refraining from pay confidentiality. Fourth, we must commit to a culture of fairness and equity by reviewing hiring and promotion practices and providing the resources and training women need to flourish. Finally, flexibility in the workplace is essential to ensure that both women and men can balance the demands of work and family life, with appropriate parental leave arrangements and other types of family caregiving. A vacation is essential for career advancement.

Businesses need to promote inclusion and diversity to combat gender disparity. Organizations must address the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles in the GCC. For instance, a significant retailer in the area has established a program to find and develop women for leadership roles as described by (Bodolica, Spraggon, & Badi, 2021). As a result, the workplace is now more inclusive and varied, and organizational performance has increased.

### **Transformational and Inclusive Leadership Styles**

The study recommends transformational and inclusive leadership styles to be the most effective leadership styles in the Middle East, where transformational leadership style has a major role in managing changes and resistance to change in any organization by providing a clear vision, unified goals, motivating and inspiring the followers (AlDossari, 2016). Recent studies show that the transformational leadership style is most suitable for women (Northouse, 2021). The inclusive leadership style has a major role in managing cultural differences, where inclusive leadership provides equal opportunities to all team members of different nationalities, races, and gender (Bourke & Espedido, 2019).

### **Conclusion**

The literature review demonstrated the importance of leadership, where it plays an important role in increasing employee satisfaction, reducing turnover, and increasing productivity and performance. Effective leadership styles play a critical role in achieving success by providing guidance, motivation, and inspiration. Effective leaders are capable of creating a shared vision and bringing people together around a common goal. With their expertise, leaders can make sound decisions and solve problems promptly. Without strong leadership, individuals and organizations would struggle to attain their goals. Hence, businesses must have effective leadership to reach their full potential (Siena Heights University, 2022).

The study focused on the challenges to implementing leadership theories in the Middle East (cultural differences, political instability, resistance to change, and gender inequality).

The study suggests that leaders overcome obstacles by applying successful leadership techniques in the Middle East to enhance both organizational performance and employee satisfaction. For instance, leaders can create more effective and resilient companies by funding education and training initiatives addressing cultural differences and supporting diversity (Hassanein & Özgit, 2022). In addition, leaders should manage resources, implement reforms, and address economic issues while also managing political instability. Leaders must balance short-term needs with long-term goals and effectively communicate with followers. Strong leadership skills are necessary to address immediate needs, and inequalities, and plan for long-term recovery while collaborating with stakeholders. Additionally, leaders can build a more inclusive workplace that draws and keeps top talent by promoting gender equality and addressing the concerns of underrepresented communities.

Finally, the study confirmed that there are different leadership styles implemented in the Middle East. However, some studies explained that the autocratic leadership style spread in the Middle East (Abi-Raad, 2019).

The study recommends transformational and inclusive leadership styles to be the most effective leadership styles in the Middle East, where transformational leadership style has a major role in managing changes and resistance to change in any organization by providing a clear vision, unified goals, motivating and inspiring the followers (AlDossari, 2016). Recent studies show that the transformational leadership style is most suitable for women (Northouse, 2021). Inclusive leadership is required to ensure that all team members feel respected, valued, and included. It plays a major role in managing cultural differences, where inclusive leadership provides equal opportunities to all team members of different nationalities, races, and gender (Bourke & Espedido, 2019).

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