

Beyond Bureaucracy: Negotiated Entrepreneurialism as a Catalyst for Green School Leadership in Kuwait

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Abstract

Kuwait's educational landscape is defined by "petro-pedagogy," a systemic contradiction where school leaders must promote sustainability within a fossil-fuel rentier economy. In this highly centralized context, principals often function as "managers of confusion," prioritizing administrative compliance over genuine environmental action. However, recent research identifies "Negotiated Entrepreneurialism"—a leadership model where agency is exercised through "creative compliance"—as a vital mechanism for navigating these constraints (Almutairi, 2026). This work-in-progress study moves beyond the diagnosis of systemic obstruction to investigate the mechanism of change. It aims to determine how the core dimensions of Negotiated Entrepreneurialism—Bounded Risk-Taking, Structural Empowerment, and Pragmatic Creativity—enable principals to implement effective Environmental Education (EE) initiatives. Building on this framework, the study employs a qualitative multiple-case study design, utilizing semi-structured interviews with secondary school principals to isolate specific behavioral strategies. Preliminary analysis suggests that successful "eco-leaders" do not wait for coherent national policy; instead, they utilize "frugal innovation" to address environmental challenges using existing low-cost resources. By reframing sustainability as a community-safety imperative, they successfully negotiate the tension between national economic identity and global climate mandates. The study concludes that "eco-entrepreneurialism" is a critical competency for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, advocating for professional development that shifts focus from pedagogical content to the strategic navigation of bureaucracy.

Keywords: Environmental Education; Green School Leadership; Negotiated Entrepreneurialism; Petro-Pedagogy; Sustainable Development.