

# Environmental Education in a Petro-State: Kuwait's School Leaders' Perspectives

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## **Abstract**

Kuwait occupies a paradoxical position as a climate-vulnerable nation heavily dependent on oil exports. While national policies increasingly emphasize sustainability, school leaders must navigate the contradiction of promoting environmental responsibility within a fossil-fuel economy. This study investigates how Kuwaiti public secondary school principals understand and enact Environmental Education (EE) amidst rapid, top-down curriculum reforms and ministerial instability. Drawing on Godfrey et al.'s (2025) "Four Pillars" and Verhelst et al.'s (2021) "ESD-Effective School Organization" frameworks, this research employs a qualitative methodology using semi-structured interviews. Anticipated findings suggest that principals currently function as "managers of confusion," prioritizing administrative compliance over deep socio-ecological purpose due to conflicting economic narratives and insufficient training. The study expects to reveal that leaders experience significant tension between national economic identity and global climate mandates, often defaulting to "petropedagogies" that avoid systemic critique. The discussion argues that without context-sensitive professional development, EE remains a shallow add-on rather than a transformative practice. By identifying how leaders can "bridge ideologies" in a centralized system, this research fills a critical gap in the literature on state-led "regimes of obstruction." Ultimately, the study aims to inform policy to cultivate leaders capable of fostering genuine sustainability in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

**Keywords:** Environmental Education, School Leadership, Petro-Pedagogy, Kuwait, Sustainable Development.