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المحتويات

Entrepreneurial Leadership: The Perceived Concepts of Academic leaders at Saudi Universities

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Abstract:

Purpose: The purpose of the current study is to explore the degree to which academic leaders at Saudi universities perceived the concepts of entrepreneurial leadership. Also, to what extent do other demographic variables influence academic leaders' perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership concepts. Methodology: A quantitative research design was adopted. The study population consisted of the academic leaders at four public universities in Saudi Arabia; two of which are established universities and two emerging universities. A stratified random sampling method was used by stratifying the sample according to the university type, with a total of 313 academic leaders participating in this study. Findings: Overall, the result indicates that academic leaders at Saudi universities moderately discerned the concepts of entrepreneurial leadership ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.28$). Particularly, academic leaders at Saudi universities highly perceived the entrepreneurial leadership dimension of visionary leadership ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 0.45$), and moderately perceived the dimensions of leadership innovation ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.37$), proactiveness ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 0.32$) and risk-taking ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.42$), respectively. The findings did not indicate significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) among academic leaders in the average insights regarding their perceived concepts of entrepreneurial leadership that can be attributed to gender, occupation and leadership experiences in higher education as a whole. However, the study revealed significant differences in favor of established universities regarding the variable of university type. In conclusion, Saudi universities receive massive support and they have an orientation towards competition and development, hence the adoption of the entrepreneurial leadership concept as a modern leadership style is needed. Thus, this study recommends enhancing the concepts of entrepreneurial leadership in universities through holding training programs, seminars and workshops within the universities to raise awareness of entrepreneurship in academic leaders' practices. Additionally, taking advantage of the high awareness of the visionary dimension for academic leaders with prompting their ability to take calculated risks would be beneficial to reach a more entrepreneurial approach in all university activities.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Leadership; Academic Leaders; Saudi universities.

القيادة الريادية: المفاهيم المدركة لدى القيادات الأكاديمية بالجامعات السعودية

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الملخص:

هدفت الدراسة الحالية التعرف على درجة إدراك القيادات الأكاديمية بالجامعات السعودية لمفاهيم القيادة الريادية، ومدى تأثير بعض المتغيرات الديموغرافية على تصوراتهم نحو تلك المفاهيم. واعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي في صورته المسحية، وتمثل مجتمعها في القيادات الأكاديمية من أربع جامعات حكومية بالمملكة العربية السعودية، منها جامعتان عريقتان وجامعتان ناشئتان. وتم أخذ عينة عشوائية طبقية حسب نوع الجامعة بلغ حجمها ٣١٣ مفردة. وباستخدام الأساليب الإحصائية المناسبة، توصلت الدراسة إلى أن إدراك القيادات الأكاديمية في الجامعات السعودية لمفاهيم القيادة الريادية جاء بدرجة متوسطة ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.28$). وعلى وجه الخصوص، حصل بعد الرؤية على درجة عالية ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 0.45$)، أما بقية الأبعاد (الابتكار، الاستباقية، تحمل المخاطر) فجاءت بدرجات متوسطة وبمتوسطات حسابية بلغت (4.17, 4.13, 3.31)، وانحرافات معيارية قدرها (0.37, 0.32, 0.42) على التوالي. ولم تظهر نتائج الدراسة فروقًا ذات دلالة إحصائية ($\alpha = 0.05$) بين وجهات نظر القيادات الأكاديمية في الجامعات السعودية فيما يتعلق بتصوراتهم لمفاهيم القيادة الريادية يمكن أن تعزى لمتغير الجنس، ونوع الوظيفة، وسنوات الخبرة القيادية في التعليم العالي؛ باستثناء متغير نوع الجامعة، حيث كشفت الدراسة عن وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية لصالح الجامعات العريقة. ختامًا، تحظى الجامعات السعودية بدعم كبير، وتتوجه نحو المنافسة والتطوير، ومن هنا تبرز الحاجة إلى تبني مفهوم القيادة الريادية كأسلوب قيادي حديث. وعليه توصي الدراسة الحالية بتعزيز مفاهيم القيادة الريادية في الجامعات من خلال عقد البرامج التدريبية والندوات وورش العمل لرفع مستوى الوعي بالريادة في ممارسات القيادات الأكاديمية، والاستفادة من إدراكهم المرتفع لبعد الرؤية كأحد أبعاد القيادة الريادية، وتعزيز قدراتهم في تحمل المخاطرة المحسوبة من أجل الوصول إلى نهج أكثر ريادة في جميع الأنشطة الجامعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القيادة الريادية؛ القيادات الأكاديمية؛ الجامعات السعودية.

INTRODUCTION:

Both leadership and entrepreneurship are powerful concepts, but when it combines Entrepreneurial Leadership it becomes more influential. However, managers possessing only leadership or entrepreneurial characteristics is not adequate for an institution's success; thus, leaders need qualities of both leadership and entrepreneurship to be successful (Esmer, & Faruk, 2017). Primarily, "leadership is the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). On the other hand, "entrepreneurship is about taking risk" (Drucker, 1970). Perhaps more importantly, the two fields are connected and they have much to learn from one other (Cogliser & Brigham, 2004). The entrepreneurial leadership concept is more than a combination of being a leader and possessing entrepreneurial qualities as it has unique characteristics (He, Standen, & Coetzer, 2017). Kuratko and Hornsby (1999) claim entrepreneurial leadership is the leadership style of the future as well as the ideal approach for contemporary 21st Century organizations. In a highly unpredictable world arena where competition continuously occurs among institutions across cultures and borders, a new type of leadership is required (Esmer, and Dayi, 2017). Greenberg, Mckone-Sweet, and Wilson (2011) affirm that entrepreneurial leadership is a modern leadership style that can change the course of the world as well as bringing dramatic changes either for individuals or institutions by inspiring creative initiatives and identifying innovative opportunities. Kuratko (2007) stresses the point that entrepreneurial leadership is a fundamental tool for organizations to flourish. Sharma, and Arora (2015), Gupta, MacMillan, and Surie (2004, Tarabishy, Fernald and Solomon (2003), Daily, McDougall, Covin, and Dalton (2002) and McGrath and MacMillan (2000) argue the significance of entrepreneurial leaders, as they are crucial for an institution's success because they are the ones who can deal with turbulent environments. Thus, successful institutions typically have entrepreneurial leadership as their approach to create and maintain entrepreneurial performance (Thompson, 1999). Moreover, present-day institutions of all kinds are seriously looking for individuals who can innovate and exercise a spirit of entrepreneurial leadership (Mars, & Torres, 2018).

Universities have been facing a growth in the demands and high pressure either from internal or external stakeholders, or both groups, to become more innovative and better equipped to contribute economic development support (Mars & Metcalf, 2009). As a result, America's institutions have been relying less on traditional methods of leadership and realized the significance and adopted this new style of leadership to become more innovative and globally competitive (Fernald, Solomon, & Tarabishy, 2005). Particularly, higher education institutions urgently need a new approach and one that fits the education's unique needs today. Entrepreneurial leadership has risen to this necessity, without which they will be doomed to failure and loss unless they avail themselves of this new type of leadership (Aldosari, 2016). Greenberger and Sexton (1988) argue that utilizing entrepreneurial leadership by leadership teams drives innovation in educational institutions since this distinctive type of leadership helps higher educational leaders to smartly and effectively meet the required challenges and crises that might be faced by institutions (Gupta, MacMillan & Surie, 2004).

In higher education, strong leadership is what maintains the university's resources and creates an entrepreneurial environment, and the university leaders who can adopt entrepreneurship can lead for success (Yokoyama, 2006). Obtaining institutional success relies on leaders who can set expectations and meet goals; yet without powerful leadership, no organization can function efficiently and sustain foreground (Attah, Obera, and Isaac, 2017). Thus, utilizing an entrepreneurial leadership style by academic leaders in higher education plays a significant role in creating the successful environment all stakeholders desire and it will assist universities to compete with other entrepreneurial universities. Numerous studies have indicated the importance of entrepreneurial leadership as a new, necessary and successful style of leadership (e.g. Cai, et al., 2019; Yang, et al., 2019; Bagheri, & Akbari; 2018; Bagheri, A. 2017; Esmer & Dayi, 2017; Renko, Tarabishy, Carsrud, et al., 2015; Musa & Fontana, 2014; Greenberg et al., 2011; Kuratko, 2007; Fernald et al. 2005; Gupta et al., 2004; Tarabishy et al., 2003). As global demand for entrepreneurial universities increases, the overwhelming research view is traditional leadership will not work (Fernández-Nogueira et al., 2018; Etzkowitz et al., 2000). Therefore, for any university wishing to compete fully in a modern and global educational world, the entrepreneurial leadership approach should be followed, which includes by the academic leaders at Saudi universities who are seeking this kind of success, yet still employ some traditional leadership aspects from the past. This

new style will contribute not only to increase the innovation at their local institutions, yet also can contribute to a knowledge-based economy and also to the development of their own national economy (Etzkowitz et al., 2000).

Understanding the concept of entrepreneurial leadership is a fundamental stage prior to implementation of entrepreneurial leadership for all those seeking its characteristics and the leadership style's longer-term operating results. Therefore, particularly for academic leaders at Saudi universities who seek a better understanding of entrepreneurial leadership to lead both their organizations and contribute to their country's economy, implementing the basic dimensions of entrepreneurial leadership bodes well. This approach also fits with the Saudi Vision 2030, as the Saudi Vision has mainly focused on entrepreneurship, especially in the educational field. Reaching the Vision, it is clear the Vision's expectations for higher education require improvement through researched risk-taking, a serious emphasis on utilizing the newest methods for higher education leadership, as well as a leadership approach fitting an entrepreneur-driven organization – pointing directly to implementation of entrepreneurial leadership. Entrepreneurial leaders are always proactive in providing innovative initiatives and implementing them out of the ordinary, as well as taking risks and not to be afraid of the consequence of mistakes (e.g. Esmer & Dayi, 2017; Renko, Tarabishy, Carsrud, et al., 2015; Musa & Fontana, 2014; Greenberg et al., 2011; Kuratko, 2007; Fernald et al. 2005; Tarabishy, Fernald and Solomon ,2003). These leadership qualities align with Vision 2030, are what distinguished, and change-oriented leaders possess, so it reasons that Saudi university leaders throughout the country can make shifts from understanding the entrepreneurial leadership concept to implementing it, in turn moving the university from the traditional situation into an entrepreneurial and competitive one.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current study is to explore the extent academic leaders at Saudi universities perceive the concepts of entrepreneurial leadership. This includes the degree to which higher education leaders understand the concept through its four dimensions: visionary, innovation, proactiveness and risk-taking.

Research Problem

Even though the concept of entrepreneurial leadership as both the merging of the ideas of leadership and entrepreneurship has drawn the attention of leadership scholars, it still remains in its early stage as research is conducted either from the perspective of the leadership or entrepreneurship (He, Standen, & Coetzer, 2017; Leitch, & Volery, 2017; Mars, & Torres, 2018). Roomi and Harrison (2011) and Al-Al-Qahtani (2015) argue that few studies have directly examined entrepreneurial leadership. The concepts of entrepreneurship and leadership globally exist, yet there is many researchers need to learn about the new combined concept of entrepreneurial leadership its corresponding aspects of ethics, training and development, contributions to competitive and other manners of success, as well as theory and interpretation also require further exploration and understanding (Tarabishy, Fernald & Solomon, 2003). Especially when concerning the conceptual development of entrepreneurial leadership in the previous studies, there is a lack of research (Renko, Tarabishy, Carsrud & Brännback, 2015). Utash (2017) states the entrepreneurial language only recently emerged in a higher education context, and there is inadequate literature on the topic of entrepreneurial leadership in this field in particular. Of the few studies done, review shows a gap and paucity of research regarding the topic of entrepreneurial leadership at Saudi higher education in particular. Specifically, while a few studies examined the topic of entrepreneurial leadership, most were limited to a particular Saudi university. For instance, Aldosary (2016) assesses the entrepreneurial leadership as a module for developing administrative leaders at Shaqra University, whereas Alsarhan & Almekhlafi (2019) addresses the reality of entrepreneurial leadership dimensions at Imam Abdul Rahman bin Faisal University. Also, Al-Qahtani (2015) provides a concentrated literature review regarding entrepreneurial leadership as a recent topic that needs more explanation. However, findings of an across - cultures study with samples from 62 societies and a total of 15,000 middle managers concluded that entrepreneurial leadership is universally endorsed along with societal diversity in its effectiveness, which suggests various promising areas of research (Gupta et al., 2004). While the cross-cultural research bodes well for future research, none of these studies have examined to what extent academic leaders at Saudi universities perceived the concept of entrepreneurial leadership as a modern leadership style, hence conducting such a study is needed.

Research Questions

The main two questions of the current study are:

RQ1: To what extent do academic leaders at Saudi universities perceive the concepts of entrepreneurial leadership?

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant difference (α = 0.05) among academic leaders at Saudi universities regarding their perception of the entrepreneurial leadership concepts attributed to the study variables (gender, university type, occupation, and leadership experience in higher education)?

Study Terminology

Entrepreneurial Leadership

Entrepreneurial leadership can be defined according to this study as a leadership style that depends on the initiative to catch the available opportunities as well as creating unique opportunities in innovative and unfamiliar ways. This readiness means having the skill and capacity to be bold enough to have vision, define that strategic vision and goals to achieve it, as well as to take the risks to see all of it through to successful result.

Significance of the Study

The result of this study may assist academic leaders at Saudi universities, either at established or emerging universities, or both, to have a better understanding of the entrepreneurial university concept, as well as to implement it for university success, especially in light of Saudi Vision 2030. The greater demand for transforming into entrepreneurial universities and the increased interest in an entrepreneurial approach justify the need of conducing this study. Thus, academic leaders who perceive the concepts of entrepreneurial leadership will transform their universities into entrepreneurial institutions. This study will also be a useful reference for future researchers planning to conduct studies related to entrepreneurial leadership in Saudi higher education, most precisely for academic leaders. In addition, it is anticipated this study will be the beginning of an ongoing body of entrepreneurial leadership research about Saudi higher education.

Literature Review

The Concept of Entrepreneurial Leadership

Entrepreneurial leadership has become a universal demand and Kuratko maintains the greater understanding of the elements that comprise the concept, the more the concept develops (Kuratko, 2007). In the past fifteen years, scholars have tried to merge the terminologies of leadership and entrepreneurship into one integrative term (Tarabishy, Fernald & Solomon ,2003) as scholars in both the field of leadership and entrepreneurship have realized that there are common and interrelated concepts between the two fields (Kempster & Cope, 2010). Indeed, leadership science has been investigated since around 500 BC, but entrepreneurship itself is considered a relatively new field, and when it is attached to the leadership field, it is becoming the most current subject, which is entrepreneurial leadership (Leitch, & Volery, 2017; Carlsson et al., 2013; Fernald, Solomon, & Tarabishy, 2005; Busenitz et al., 2003). (Yang, 2008; Esmer, and Dayi, 2017) indicate that the concept of entrepreneurial leadership emerged when leadership scholars tried to combine the potential of leadership and the spirit of entrepreneurial to produce a new leadership style that called "entrepreneurial leadership". Even though some researches have utilized the term of entrepreneurial leadership, few of them define the concept and the domain is still developing as well as requiring definitional clarity (Leitch & Volery, 2017 and Leitch et al. 2013).

Cunningham and Lischeron (1991) describe entrepreneurial leadership as a blend of characteristics such as setting clear goals, creating opportunities, empowering people, and developing a human resource system. From a new perspective, (Tarabishy, Fernald and Solomon, 2003; Gupta, McMillan & Surie, 2004) define an entrepreneurial leader as the transformational leader who has the ability to lead in a dynamic environment which offers lucrative opportunities. Yang, Guan & Pu (2019) perceive entrepreneurial leaders as primary in organizations because they create a vision, mobilize employees along with obtaining their commitment. Also, they can motivate employees to generate strategic value and then conclude with high performance that leads to organizational success.

Overall, entrepreneurial leadership includes a new model for thinking and action, which starts with a unique vision and then utilizes a distinctive decision-making logic (Greenberg, et al., 2011). Ireland, Hitt, and Sirmon (2003) define entrepreneurial leadership as the capacity to influence others and strategically

manage resources to be able to confirm both opportunity-seeking and advantage-seeking behaviors. From the perspective of (Kumar, 2012), entrepreneurial leadership is defined as the process by which initiatives are taken, responsibilities are assumed, as well as anticipating the future, taking risks, creating an environment driven by innovation and creativity. Based on the previous review of definitions, entrepreneurial leadership in higher education can be defined as the greatly proactive leadership that precedes events, anticipates what the future will be as it prepares for it, along with seeking opportunities and, if not available, creates them so that creative ideas are produced out of the ordinary.

Characteristics of Entrepreneurial Leaders in Higher Education

The scholars have not agreed yet comprehensively upon specific characteristics of entrepreneurial leaders; however, some studies have merged the characteristics of the leader and entrepreneurs to conclude with the features of the entrepreneurial leaders. For instance, Fernald et al. (2005) concluded with five characteristics of entrepreneurial leaders after an exhaustive review of 136 sources related to both fields' leadership and entrepreneurship. These characteristics comprise visionary, risk-taker, achievement-oriented, able to motivate, creative, flexible, persistent, and patient. He et al., (2017) present the top ten characteristics of entrepreneurial leaders which are resilience, vision, passion, integrity, self-confidence, ability to motivate, decisive, sociable, intuitive, flexible. Gupta, et al. (2004) provide a wide range of entrepreneurial leaders' characteristics by using data from the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) and conducting a study on leadership. This study consisted of a 62-society cross-cultural sample of over 15,000 middle managers and defined characteristics such as performance-oriented, ambitious, informed, insightful/intuitive, visionary, foresight, confident, diplomat, effective bargainer, intellectual, team builder, integrator, positive, decisive. Additionally, Gupta et. al found qualities of study subjects being convincing, encouraging, inspirational, enthusiastic, improvement-oriented, and stimulating. Also, Morand (2001) indicates emotional intelligence as one of the essential features to entrepreneurial leaders. Swiercz and Lyndon (2002) divide the characteristics of entrepreneurial Leaders into self-competencies and functional competencies. Self-competencies were found to be related to the personality of the entrepreneurial leaders such as proactiveness, innovativeness, and risk-taking, while functional competencies are associated to the task performances such as operations, finance, marketing and human resources (Swiercz & Lydon, 2002). Overall, based on the comprehensive review of literature, researchers find entrepreneurial leader characteristics represent the subset of personal attributes to both leaders and entrepreneurs (He et al., 2017).

In the academic context, while there has been relatively scant targeted research, a few more recent findings stand out; Mars and Metcalf (2009) identified some entrepreneurial leader characteristics such as originality, curiosity, basic research ability, desire for academic freedom, and interest in serving the public interest. Moreover, Cleverley-Thompson (2016) points out that proactiveness is one of the significant characteristics for leaders in higher education as the Entrepreneurial Academic Deans in America mentioned. Baker (2018) emphasizes that entrepreneurial leaders are becoming an essential and recognized feature of many universities. These leaders need to possess a strong background in entrepreneurial leadership to be able to cope with various jobs. These positions now tend to require a leader to be open-minded to contemporary experiences and ready to deal with the accelerated transformation (NCEE, 2018). Also documented in the higher education context, entrepreneurial leaders have demands to focus on engaging students to think innovatively and strategically in their work (McClure, 2016), including an emphasis on stress in academic progress and achievement (Kalar & Antoncic, 2015) as well as their standing in the academic world (McCaffery, 2018). Flexibility to various methods of teaching outside the traditional methods and having innovative approaches in teaching students are other characteristics of academic entrepreneurial leaders (Bienkowska et al., 2016). It is vital for leaders in higher education to build relationships with stakeholders in the community and to be open-minded to the idea of approaching local entrepreneurs within the industry to offer additional support and advice through university-industry collaborations (Foss and Gibson, 2015). As He, et al.'s (2017) research also showed, adopting entrepreneurial approaches among staff and students is a feature of entrepreneurial leaders in higher education through promoting and rewarding entrepreneurial behavior and encouraging staff and students to adopt such attitudes, according to Etkowitz (2016). Besides being creative and innovative, entrepreneurial leaders should adhere to government and industry policy (Etkowitz, 2016).

Dimensions of Entrepreneurial Leadership

A number of dimensions have emerged to explain entrepreneurial leadership, according to the small body of current research, and this study mainly focused on the most agreed upon dimensions by these scholars. According to previous literature, proactive personality, vision, innovation, and risk-taking are shared dimensions between leadership and entrepreneurship, although some scholars merge proactive personality and risk-taking since the proactive leader can take risks (EL-Annan, 2013). Thus, EL-Annan (2013) considered proactive personality, vision and innovation as the three integrated dimensions between leadership and entrepreneurship. Selvaraja et al (2017) suggested that real entrepreneurial leaders are those who have vision, are proactive, innovative, and willing to take risks. More importantly, leaders with these qualities perform entrepreneurial practices in all aspects of their leadership. The entrepreneurial leadership style plays a significant role in innovation at any institution, in the educational field or otherwise (Jawi & Tezar, 2016). While proactive leaders remain ahead of the competition and keep focused on the future, leaders who follow a clear vision are usually more successful in involving employees and inspiring them to focus on their vision and thus following them (Cheema et al., 2015). Other research authors assume that this type of leadership success is derived through the motivation of subordinates and maintaining achievement close to a clearly established vision. Chan et al. (2015) noted that successful entrepreneurial leaders have several personality traits in common which is a beneficial indication for those seeking employment in this field, if they include a visionary, proactiveness, innovation, risk taking approach, they are more likely to bring an entrepreneurial spirit to their chosen field. Lumpkin and Dess (2015) point to an entrepreneurial orientation that describes the personality types who possess the suitable skills to be natural entrepreneurs. An innovative character, they claim, is also vital to an entrepreneurial leader, meaning a leader who approaches challenges with original thought and creativity, and then applies this to their ventures. Therefore, for these accepted terms in these studies, in this research the four dimensions of proactive, visionary, innovation and risk taking are considered. Following is a brief discussion of each:

Proactiveness

A leader who is proactive and able to discover and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities is one of entrepreneurial leadership dimension that has drawn highly the attention by many authors (e.g. Esmer & Dayi, 2017; Renko, Tarabishy, Carsrud, et al., 2015; Bagheri, 2013; Kumar, 2012; Greenberg et al., 2011; Harris and Gibson, 2008; Chen, 2007; Kuratko, 2007; Fernald et al. 2005; Tarabishy, Fernald and Solomon ;2003). One of the main distinctive features of the entrepreneurial leader is his or her initiative to provide pioneering ideas. Proactive can be defined as searching opportunities, providing initiatives, taking actions to make exceptional change happens; in other words, it suggests meeting the challenges of tough circumstances instead of satisfying the status quo (Crant, 2000). A proactive leader is the one who is a self-initiated, future-focused, and aims to bring changes for positive performance results (Wu & Wang, 2011). Prieto (2010) argues the significance of being a proactive and initiative leader in very dynamic and decentralized institutions as highly required for organizational success. In the same context Fuller and Marler (2009) indicate that high performance and job achievement at organizations can be reached with leaders who have a robust proactive personality and are mainly focused on the significance of leaders' proactivity in today's complicated and unpredictable environments.

Visionary

In addition to proactiveness, a second dimension for entrepreneurial leadership is building a vision to mobilize a supportive team committed to overcoming obstacles and creating strategic values (e.g. He et al., 2017; Kempster & Cope, 2010; Chen, 2007; Fernald et al. 2005; Gupta et al. 2004; Ireland et al. 2003; Perren, 2002). The most critical capabilities for entrepreneurial leaders are the ability and skills to attract the most influential team members who can achieve the shared vision (Chen, 2007). Greenberger and Sexton (1988) argue that entrepreneurial leadership by the leadership team plays a vital role and considerably drives innovation in institutions. Also, Chen (2007) suggests that entrepreneurial leadership can motivate entrepreneurial team members themselves to be more creative. Thus, creating a strategic vision that focuses on entrepreneurial activities by academic leaders at higher education is a vital feature of the entrepreneurial leader who seeks his or her organization to be an entrepreneurial one. Not only this, but an entrepreneurial leader also stands up to the challenges and faces the complicated issues to achieve

the vision. On the other hand, ambitious visions may be destroyed by the fear of committing mistakes along with the absence of challenge (Fernald, Solomon, & Tarabishy, 2005).

Innovation

Thirdly, providing non-existing innovative ideas or services is one of the most fundamental dimensions of entrepreneurial leadership (e.g. Bagheri, 2013; Kempster & Cope, 2010; Kuratko 2007; Ireland et al. 2003; Perren, 2002). Innovation is one of the essential competencies of entrepreneurial leaders (Kirby, 2003; Ireland et al.; 2003). An entrepreneurial leader is the one who replaces traditional methods with innovative new approaches that are difficult to imitate, as well as thinks beyond the constraints of current rules and available resources (Smith, Petersen, & Fund, 2006; Gupta, et al., 2004). Bagheri (2017) suggests with innovative characteristics, there is a strong relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and innovative work behavior along with opportunity for and recognition of employees. Therefore, higher education institutions are in urgent need of entrepreneurial leadership to create innovative and unique ideas to meet the increasing demands of society as well as compete with other like entrepreneurial institutions. Entrepreneurial leadership positively impacts innovation work, improves idea exploration, generates ideas itself and then assists in implementing and championing them (Bagheri & Akbari, 2018).

Risk Taking

Lastly, taking risks beyond individual and organizational security is another dimension of entrepreneurial leadership (Kumar 2012; Roomi & Harrison, 2011; Kuratko ;2007; Harris and Gibson, 2008; Chen, 2007; Perren,2002). Musa and Fontana (2014) define taking risks as a conscious decision to be involved in calculated risk projects. Kuratko (2007) argues that numerous risks are truly worth taking and regardless of uncertainties may eventually lead to outstanding success. Of course, it is given leaders must understand that there is no perfect way to predict the future and being unable to take risks and deal with uncertainty prevent institutions from obtaining their goals (Fernald, Solomon, & Tarabishy, 2005). Therefore, the leader entrepreneurial must not be satisfied with a predictable reality, which means taking the calculated risk and trying what is new and unfamiliar for his or her institution to be distinct from others following the strategic vision.

Previous Studies

Previous studies, above, have discussed the topic of entrepreneurial leadership from the perspective of defining characteristics of leaders with entrepreneurship. Other aspects of entrepreneurial leadership from the literature review includes elements of the status of development of countries, creativity in and of itself, the success of training for entrepreneurship in the educational and other fields, and the success entrepreneurship achieves. Overall, there remains room for much study on the entrepreneurial leader. The following is a discussion of previous studies that relate to the current study.

As noted early, Leitch and Volery (2017) sums up the body of current research on entrepreneurial leadership that entrepreneurial leadership an area much in its infancy. Although the concepts of leadership and entrepreneurship have been combined, the entrepreneurial leadership field is still developing. The concepts of entrepreneurial leadership require more research and clarity, as well as its tools that utilize to assess the characteristics and behaviors that need development.

The purpose of Allahar's (2019) study was to identify a leadership style that suitable for the tremendous demands and development in such a developing country. Thus, the study examined the field of leadership studies and reviewed the development of leadership concepts from the pre-20th century to the present. The findings indicated that the concept of leadership had been widely investigated in literature as the vast majority of these studies arise from North America and consider the culture of those countries, while these studies are in its early stages in developing countries. The author recommended that the Caribbean leaders must utilize a more sustainable method, as well as apply ethical and emerging leadership styles suitable for the rapid development of a modern society.

The impact of entrepreneurial leadership on individuals' creativity was the focus of another study by Cai, Lysova, Khapova, and Bossink (2019), which examined the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and creativity through creative efficacy. The findings of this study indicate that there is a positive relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and employee and team creativity. These relationships promote the idea of both employee creative self-efficacy and team creative efficacy.

The study conducted by Alsarhan & Almekhlafi (2019) examined the reality of entrepreneurial leadership dimensions (entrepreneurial innovation, strategic vision, proactiveness, bear the risks and investment opportunities), much as studies above show, yet these are specific to academic leaders at the Imam Abdul Rahman bin Faisal University. The study utilized a descriptive approach with a questionnaire applied to a sample of 82 academic leaders. The study found that the availability of entrepreneurial leadership dimensions reached a medium degree, which are strategic vision, entrepreneurial innovation, proactiveness, investment opportunities, and bear the risks, respectively, and not unlike other research outside of the educational field that is related to the identification of suitable dimensions for entrepreneurship. Also, no significant differences are found regarding the demographic variable of the study, such as gender, scientific rank, administrative location, and experience years. The study recommends adopting entrepreneurial leadership in higher education by attracting creative minds and building a proactive organizational culture along with fostering risk-taking.

Mars and Torres (2018) confirmed that even though there is a high request for individuals who are innovative and entrepreneurially- oriented, entrepreneurial leadership education is still to be seen regularly as a business-oriented field. This study examined the impacts of an interdisciplinary, project-based entrepreneurial leadership course on student proclivities toward leading change. In particular, the study utilized a retrospective pre- and post-measure pre-experimental. Findings show an improvement in entrepreneurial leadership tendency after course completion. Furthermore, enhancing the collegiate entrepreneurial leadership curriculum will positively increase students to become effective leaders of change.

Utash's (2017) also shows knowledge building as a key to entrepreneurial success; his qualitative phenomenological study investigated the leadership, spirit, and experiences of leaders who committed to an entrepreneurial leadership philosophy at community colleges. The study concluded with the factors contributing to the leaders' experiences, fundamental leadership competencies, engagement, and an entrepreneurial ecosystem; and creating a standard definition for community college entrepreneurial leadership. Moreover, this study provided several imperatives to be considered for leaders who aspire to be entrepreneurial leaders, including the idea that learning the skills of entrepreneurship is critical and another one that supports the work of Mars and Torres (2018), above, which is the belief entrepreneurial leadership can be learned. Other essential requirements include to always consider the alignment with mission, mandate, and strategic plan; to learn entrepreneurial leadership outside of higher education; to improve the leadership characteristics, traits, and attributes for successful entrepreneurial leaders; and, to extend knowledge on becoming an entrepreneurial leader.

A study carried out by Aldosary (2016) aimed to provide a module for developing the performance of administrative leaders in the faculties of Shaqra University in light of entrepreneurial leadership. Even though the results indicated that deans encourage employees to obtain technical and scientific qualifications that contribute to the development of practical and scientific methods, they still adopt entrepreneurial leadership at a moderate level, which is mainly acceptable. The study concluded with a proposed module to activate the entrepreneurial leadership approach in the development of leadership performance at the faculties of Shaqra University through providing vision, mission, strategic objectives, and mechanisms to implement the proposed module.

Al-Qahtani (2015) provided a suggested framework for entrepreneurial leadership at Saudi universities based on reviewing literature and experiences related to entrepreneurial leadership. The study also offered several recommendations, the most important of which is the necessity of adopting the proposed framework for entrepreneurial leadership and creating the academic, legislative and regulatory environment that supports it. Moreover, the research recommendations include ensuring the selection of leaders who possess the characteristics and skills of entrepreneurial leadership and training them.

Another study conducted by Pihie, Asuimiran, & Bagheri (2014) aimed to identify the relationship between the practices of principals' entrepreneurial leadership and school innovativeness from teachers' point of view. Findings indicate that teachers highly perceived the importance of being entrepreneurial leaders for school principals. Nevertheless, school principals moderately practice the entrepreneurial leadership approach. Overall, this study found that there is a significant relationship between the school

principals' practices of entrepreneurial leadership and school innovativeness from the teachers' perceptions.

Agbim, Oriarewo, and Owutuamor (2013) evaluated the impacts of entrepreneurial leadership dimensions (strategic, communicative, personal, and incentive factors) on entrepreneurial success. Moreover, the study examined the influence of some demographic variables such as (age, gender, higher educational attainment, and entrepreneurial experience) on entrepreneurial leadership capabilities. The findings reveal that the dimensions of entrepreneurial leadership have positive impacts on sustainable entrepreneurship success. Also, the differences in demographic variables influence entrepreneurial capabilities. Hence, entrepreneurial leadership fosters the success of sustainable entrepreneurship. The authors recommended entrepreneurs think and work strategically, develop their communication skills, along with their personality traits and motivational skills.

Comment on Previous Studies

Through review of the previous literature, there are similarities and differences with the current study; however, one overriding situation, as noted from the research of many and specifically Leitch and Volery (2017), is the need for further study in this area of leader entrepreneurship, both among all organizations and in the educational field. One common feature, nonetheless, of the current study and previous studies is addressing the topic of entrepreneurial leadership as a modern leadership approach to aid in the leadership approach for a new world. The present study differs from previous studies as it focuses on the perceived concept of entrepreneurial leadership from the perspectives of academic leaders at all Saudi universities, both established and emerging universities, whereas other studies focused on solely one university or other organizations where leader entrepreneurship might flourish, as well as on the characteristics of this specific leadership style. The study focused on both established and emerging universities.

Methodology

The current study used a quantitative research method and utilized a survey to collect information regarding the level of perceiving the concept of the entrepreneurial leadership for academic leaders at Saudi universities. Since no study has examined the perceived concepts of entrepreneurial leadership for academic leaders at all types of Saudi universities, a survey to assess the perception of the concepts of entrepreneurial leadership was designed specifically for the purpose of this research. A pilot study was conducted to measure reliability and validity as well. An online survey was sent to leaders (Dean, Vice Dean, Department Chair, Vice Department Chair) at four Saudi universities, which encompassed both emerging and established universities.

Population and Study Sample

The study population consisted of all decision-making status academic leaders such as (College Deans, Vice Deans, Department Chairs, and Vice Department Chairs) at four Saudi universities, two of them established universities (King Saud University and King Abdulaziz University (and two emerging universities (Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University and Jeddah University). The total number of the study population is approximately 1,639 leaders according to the Ministry of Education website (Ministry of Education, 2019). The stratified random sampling method was used to determine the respondents for this study from each university, stratifying the sample by university type. The suitable sample size for the target population equals 313 individuals based on the basic table for determining sample size (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The total received for this study is 319 responses.

Characteristics of Study Sample

The current study examines the characteristics of its sample by identifying demographic variables such as: gender, university type, occupation and experience as an academic leader in higher education, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 Characteristics of Study Sample

Variable	Category/ Characteristics	No.	%
Gender	Male	216	68%
	Female	103	32%
University Type	Established University	187	59%
	Emerging University	132	41%
Occupation	Dean	2	1%

Variable	Category/ Characteristics	No.	%
	Vice Dean	58	18%
	Department Chair	174	54%
	Vice Department Chair	85	27%
Leadership Experience in HE	Less than 5 years	94	29%
	From 5 years to 10 years	159	50%
	More than 10 years	66	21%

Study Instrument

A survey was developed to answer the study's research questions through the guidance and review of the previous studies in the field of entrepreneurial leadership such as (Aldosary, 2016; Renko, El Tarabishy, Carsrud, & Brännback, 2015; Greenberg et al., 2011; Kuratko, 2007; Fernald et al. 2005; Gupta et al., 2004; Tarabishy, Fernald and Solomon ,2003; Etzkowitz et al., 2000). The purpose of the original designed questionnaire was to collect data regarding the perceived concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership for academic leaders at Saudi universities. The developed instrument for this study consists of two parts. The first part is demographic variables such as (gender, university type, occupation and experience as an academic leader in higher education). The second part is a measured scale to assess the level of perceived understanding of the concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership for academic leaders at Saudi universities. This part consisted of 24 items within four dimensions (proactiveness, visionary, innovation, and risk taking) each dimension within 6 items. A six-point Likert scale (l = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree, with no neutral point) was utilized to measure this variable. To identify to what extent academic leaders at Saudi universities perceived the concepts of entrepreneurial leadership, the concept related to entrepreneurial leadership was divided into three levels by the statistical method as presented in Table 2.

Table2 *6 points Likert Scale*

Likert Scale	Interval	Discerption	Estimation level
1	1.00 - < 1.84	Strongly disagree	1.00 – < 2.68 low level
2	1.84 - < 2.68	Disagree	
3	2.68 - < 3.52	Slightly Disagree	2.68– <4.36 Moderate level
4	3.52 - < 4.36	Slightly Agree	
5	4.36 - < 5.20	Agree	4.36 – 6.00 High level
6	5.20 - 6.00	Strongly agree	

Validity and Reliability

A pilot study was conducted for a sample of 40 respondents to measure the validity and reliability of the instrument and the respondents of the pilot study were isolated from the actual study's sample.

To measure the validity, the content validity was utilized by presenting the instrument in its initial form to a panel of arbitrators. In light of their observations and suggestions the survey was designed in its final version. Internal consistency was also measured by calculating the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of the pilot study for each item with the total degree of the of the dimension to which they belong to and then, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of each dimension with the total degree of the instrument. As shown in Table 3, all correlation coefficients are statistically significant demonstrating the validity of internal consistency for the instrument.

Table 3 *Pearson Correlation Coefficients for each Items to the total degree of its Dimension*

Dimension 1		Dimension 2		Dimension 3		Dimension 4	
N	R	N	R	N	R	N	R
1	.494**	7	.890**	13	.738**	19	.910**
2	.616**	8	.692**	14	.334*	20	.922**
3	.756**	9	.401*	15	.370*	21	.380*
4	.868**	10	.711**	16	.361*	22	.930**
5	.606**	11	.893**	17	.360*	23	.341*
6	.747**	12	.575**	18	.752**	24	.345*

Pearson Correlation Coefficients for each Dimension to the total degree of the instrument

Dimension 1		Dimension 2		Dimension 3		Dimension 4	
R	.799**	R	.834**	R	.578**	R	.944**

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*
** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

The reliability of the designed instrument was measured by using the pilot study data. Overall, the instrument has a large Cronbach's Alpha of .927, and the four main dimensions have good and acceptable reliabilities of 0.773, 0.781, 0.906, and 0.779, respectively.

Data Analysis and Results

Descriptive statistics were used to determine to what extent academic leaders at Saudi universities perceived the concepts of entrepreneurial leadership. T- Test and One- way ANOVAs were calculated to determine any differences among the participants' perceptions of the entrepreneurial leadership concepts and can be attributed to the demographic study variables. This section presents the results of the study according to its questions as follows:

Results Related to RQ1

The first question asked, "To what extent do academic leaders at Saudi universities perceive the concepts of entrepreneurial leadership?". The means (M) and standard deviations (SD) were calculated for the total ratings and also the ratings for each item and dimension. The total score of the perceived concepts of entrepreneurial leadership for academic leaders at Saudi universities was created from 24 items in the instrument, subsequent in four dimension subscales: (1) Proactiveness, (2) Visionary, (3) Innovation, and (4) Risk Taking. Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for these dimensions and the overall score on the perceived concepts of entrepreneurial leadership instrument according to academic leaders' responses.

Table 4 *Descriptive statistics for academic leaders' responses on the perceived concepts of entrepreneurial leadership overall and subscales (N = 319)*

Dimensions of Entrepreneurial Leadership	M	SD	Level
Dimension of Proactiveness	4.13	0.32	Moderate
Dimension of Visionary	4.41	0.45	High
Dimension of Risk Taking	3.31	0.42	Moderate
Dimension of Innovation	4.17	0.37	Moderate
Perceived Concepts of Entrepreneurial Leadership Overall	4.00	0.28	Moderate

As shown in Table 4, the total perceptions of the entrepreneurial leadership concepts for academic leaders at Saudi Universities was 4.00 with a standard deviation of 0.28 which reflects a moderate level of perceiving the concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership for academic leaders at Saudi Universities. The highest rated subscale was Visionary (*M* = 4.41, *SD* = 0.45), followed by Innovation (*M* = 4.17, *SD* = 0.37) and then Proactiveness (*M* = 4.13, *SD* = 0.32). The lowest rated subscales were Risk Taking (*M* = 3.31, *SD* = 0.42). The highest item was *Setting strategic visions for the future* (M = 4.66, SD = 0. .81) which related to the dimension of Visionary and the lowest item was *Courage to face difficulties and challenges* (M = 3.06, SD = 0. .87) which related to the dimension of Risk Taking.

Results Related to RQ2

The second question asked, "Is there a statistically significant difference (α = 0.05) among academic leaders at Saudi universities regarding their perceived of the entrepreneurial leadership concepts attributed to the study variables (gender, university type, occupation, and leadership experience in higher education)?". In this regard, T- Test for gender and university type and one- way ANOVAs for occupation and leadership experience in higher education were performed to compare the differences in the average perceptions of academic leaders at both established and emerging Saudi Universities regarding their perceived concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership.

The results in Table 5 indicate that there are no significant differences in the average perceptions of the perceived concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership between male academic leaders and female academic leaders and for the dimensions of Visionary and Risk Taking. This may be attributed to the fact that there is harmony in the perceptions of the respondents regarding the perceived concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership regardless the gender of the respondent. However, there are significant differences in the average perceptions of the perceived concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership between

male and female academic leaders for the dimensions of Proactiveness and Innovation in favor to male respondents. In particular, academic male leaders highly perceived the dimensions of Proactiveness and Innovation to a much greater extent than academic women leaders.

Table 5 *T- Test results of the differences between the mean responses of academic leaders by gender*

Dimension	Group	N.	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Dimension of Proactiveness	Male	216	4.17	0.30	3.342	.001
	Female	103	4.04	0.33		
Dimension of Visionary	Male	216	4.43	0.45	1.580	.115
	Female	103	4.35	0.45		
Dimension of Risk Taking	Male	216	3.28	0.44	-1.859	.064
	Female	103	3.37	0.37		
Dimension of Innovation	Male	216	4.20	0.38	2.685	.008
	Female	103	4.09	0.32		
Perceived Concepts of Entrepreneurial Leadership Overall	Male	216	4.02	0.27	1.746	.082
	Female	103	3.97	0.30		
Emerging Universities		**132**	**3.88**	**0.20**		

The results in Table 6 indicate that there are significant differences in the average perceptions of the perceived concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership between Established Universities and Emerging Universities and for the three dimensions Proactiveness, Visionary, and Innovation in favor to Established Universities. In this case, academic leaders in established universities highly perceived entrepreneurial leadership concepts much more so than those in emerging universities. However, there are no significant differences in the average perceptions of the perceived concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership between Established Universities and Emerging Universities in the dimension of Risk Taking, which indicates that there is consensus in the perceptions of the respondents about the dimension of risk taking regardless the university type of the respondent.

Table 6 *T- Test results of the differences between the mean responses of academic leaders by university type*

Dimension	Group	N.	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Dimension of Proactiveness	Established Universities	187	4.16	0.33	2.545	.011
	Emerging Universities	132	4.07	0.29		
Dimension of Visionary	Established Universities	187	4.65	0.41	16.153	.000
	Emerging Universities	132	4.06	0.23		
Dimension of Risk Taking	Established Universities	187	3.30	0.42	-.054	.957
	Emerging Universities	132	3.31	0.42		
Dimension of Innovation	Established Universities	187	4.26	0.38	5.860	.000
	Emerging Universities	132	4.04	0.28		
Perceived Concepts of Entrepreneurial Leadership Overall	Established Universities	187	4.09	0.29	8.137	.000
	Emerging Universities	132	3.88	0.20		

According to ANOVA results, Table 7 demonstrate there are no significant differences overall in the average perceptions of the perceived concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership among academic leaders attributed to occupation and for the three dimensions Visionary, Innovation and Risk Taking. This may be attributed to the fact that there is accord in the perceptions of the respondents about the dimensions Visionary, Innovation and Risk Taking regardless their occupation. However, there are significant differences in the average perceptions of the perceived concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership among Department Chairs, Vice Department Chairs regarding the dimension of Proactiveness in favor to Department Chairs. In particular, Department Chairs have highly perceived the concept of Proactiveness than Vice Department Chairs.

Kruskal Wallis Test was also performed, and it indicated that there are no significant differences in the average perceptions of the perceived concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership among academic leaders overall and for the three dimensions Visionary, Innovation and Risk Taking expect the dimension of Proactiveness which shows significant differences between Department Chairs, Vice Department Chairs in favor to Department Chairs.

Table 7 *ANOVA results of the differences between the mean responses of academic leaders by occupation*

Dimension	Group	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Dimension of Proactiveness	Between Groups	1.056	3	.352	3.480	.016
	Within Groups	31.874	315	.101		
	Total	32.931	318			
Dimension of Visionary	Between Groups	1.041	3	.347	1.701	.167
	Within Groups	64.274	315	.204		
	Total	65.315	318			
Dimension of Risk Taking	Between Groups	.108	3	.036	.198	.898
	Within Groups	57.279	315	.182		
	Total	57.387	318			
Dimension of Innovation	Between Groups	.357	3	.119	.878	.452
	Within Groups	42.656	315	.135		
	Total	43.013	318			
Perceived Concepts of Entrepreneurial Leadership Overall	Between Groups	.392	3	.131	1.672	.173
	Within Groups	24.617	315	.078		
	Total	25.010	318			

According to ANOVA results, there are no significant differences in the average perceptions of the perceived concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership among academic leaders attributed to experience as an academic leader in higher education as a whole as well as for the four dimensions Proactiveness, Visionary, Innovation and Risk Taking, this result is also confirmed by the Kruskal Wallis Test. This may be attributed to the fact that there is agreement in the perceptions of the respondents about the concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership and its dimensions regardless their years of experience as an academic leader in higher education.

Table 8 *ANOVA results of the differences between the mean responses of academic leaders by experience as an academic leader in higher education*

Dimension	Group	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Dimension of Proactiveness	Between Groups	.468	2	.234	2.280	.104
	Within Groups	32.462	316	.103		
	Total	32.931	318			
Dimension of Visionary	Between Groups	.136	2	.234	.329	.720
	Within Groups	65.179	316	.103		
	Total	65.315	318			
Dimension of Risk Taking	Between Groups	.002	2	.001	.007	.993
	Within Groups	57.385	316	.182		
	Total	57.387	318			
Dimension of Innovation	Between Groups	.617	2	.308	2.298	.102
	Within Groups	42.396	316	.134		
	Total	43.013	318			
Perceived Concepts of Entrepreneurial Leadership Overall	Between Groups	.198	2	.099	1.262	.285
	Within Groups	24.811	316	.079		
	Total	25.010	318			

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent of perceptions of the concepts of entrepreneurial leadership by academic leaders at Saudi universities. The study found the level for the total average mean for perceived concepts of entrepreneurial leadership for academic leaders at Saudi universities was moderate at 4.00 in both established universities and emerging universities. This total average measure of the four dimensions for this study of perceiving the entrepreneurial leadership concepts include Proactiveness, Visionary, Risk Taking, and Innovation. The total average mean for these dimensions' ranges from 3.31 to 4.41. The highest rank dimension is Visionary, measuring 4.41, whereas the lowest rank dimension is Risk Taking with a mean of 3.31. This indicates that there is a sensible perception of

entrepreneurial leadership concepts among academic leaders at Saudi universities, an essential step in the establishment and dissemination of the entrepreneurial thought culture. Additionally, this shows the modern style of entrepreneurial leadership is already present to a measurable degree at Saudi universities, which in turn plays a major role in the future potential for transforming current leadership into entrepreneurial universities. Although academic leaders at Saudi universities perceived the concepts of entrepreneurial leadership, the level of this perception reached an average degree, which means more efforts to consolidate and disseminate the culture of entrepreneurial leadership and its dimensions are needed among academic leaders. These results agree with previous research conducted on the entrepreneurial leadership in general as well as specifically for the higher education field.

Acceding to the findings, academic leaders at Saudi universities highly perceived the dimension of Visionary as a basic concept of entrepreneurial leadership. This high perception is significant for the university entrepreneurial leader because of the more incipient nature of the leadership style and the more traditional leadership Saudi universities are known to possess in the recent past. This adoption of leaders creating visions may be due to the fact that all Saudi sectors either public or private are moving towards Saudi Vision 2030, which was chaired by HRH Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in 2016. Vision 2030 mainly focuses on transforming The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia an into an entrepreneurial country in various fields. The high perception of the study's Visionary dimension by academic leaders may be attributed to the fact that all Saudi established and emerging universities have offices to achieve the National Vision 2030. The National Vision 2030 offices at Saudi universities are specialized in receiving and supporting initiatives to achieve the success for Vision 2030. The low rating of the Risk Taking among the four dimensions indicates the need of encouraging leaders at Saudi universities to be risk-takers and be fearless to assume calculated risk as a strategy to reach the both university and national visions from the entrepreneurial position. Development of risk taking seems possible in the milieu of the KSA as several risks are worth of taking since tremendous opportunities primarily depend on high risks (Kuratko, 2007).

The vital dimensions of entrepreneurial leadership such as Visionary, Proactiveness, Innovation, and Risk Taking that collaborate with different study demographics such as gender, university type, occupation, and leadership experience in higher education are fundamental to comprehensively examine the entrepreneurial leadership concepts as perceived by academic leaders at Saudi Universities. For instance, the result for the research Question Two was utilized to determine if there are statistically significant differences among the participants' perspectives regarding the concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership at Saudi universities that can be attributed to gender, university type, occupation, and leadership experience in higher education.

Overall, there are no significant differences in the average perceptions of the perceived concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership between male and female academic leaders as a whole. According to these findings, it is obvious regardless of gender, both male and female academic leaders are equally perceiving the concepts of entrepreneurial leadership. Over decades it has been argued that entrepreneurship attached to men, however, women are entering and prove that anyone is capable of becoming an entrepreneur based on the current developments of the entrepreneurship field (Patil & Deshpande, 2019; Levie & Hart, 2011; Patterson ,2011). More specifically, there are no significant differences in the average perceptions between male and female academic leaders for the dimensions of Visionary and Risk Taking. The current findings are not aligned with the results of Henry, Foss, and Ahl (2015), who found that both men and women perform differently in the Visionary dimension of the entrepreneurial leadership concept. The study findings, however, agree with Western and Shaw (2018) who suggested that in both the genders risk taking is a shared side of entrepreneurial leadership and where these dimensions are intimately associated with the particular traits of an individual. However, in this current research, there is no significant difference between the two genders. Consequently, their performance depends on the characteristics owned by both genders. Conversely, the study findings indicate that there are significant differences in the average perceptions between male and female academic leaders regarding the dimensions of Proactiveness and Innovation in favor of male respondents. When focusing on the Proactiveness dimension in the context of gender, active personality is a threat to all women's entrepreneurial intentions. Women are vulnerable to change and react differently to it as opposed to men (Grandy & Ingols, 2016). On the other hand, men respond quickly to Proactiveness and male entrepreneurs have an added advantage over their female

counterparts who fail to perform well in this dimension (Grandy & Ingols, 2016). Moreover, women face challenges in innovative matters, too. Even though there is a belief that male entrepreneurs are more capable of inventing entrepreneurial ideas, entrepreneurs have an equal opportunity to achieve their dreams regardless of their gender. So according to the current findings, these gender differences may be due to the fact that male academic leaders have had more previous leadership opportunities and experience and for longer time, while women leaders are more recent in leader positions in this field; these unknown, yet potential situational differences may account for the greater Proactiveness awareness of males over female Saudi university leaders and counterparts at this time.

According to the study's findings, the type of the university indicates significant differences in the average perceptions of the perceived concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership between Established Universities and Emerging Universities as a whole; and, when the two types of distinct Saudi universities are compared for the three dimensions Proactiveness, Visionary, and Innovation, there is greater perception of entrepreneurship in favor to Established Universities. These differences may be attributed to the fact that established universities have a culture of entrepreneurial leadership. and They perform many workshops and meetings to support the importance of and educate about entrepreneurial leadership along with establishing entrepreneurship centers, which have been in existence for many years, compared to emerging universities which only recently establish such centers. However, concerning the Risk-Taking dimension, the result shows that there are no significant differences in the average perceptions between Established Universities and Emerging Universities, which means both types of university are similar or equal in perceiving the Risk-Taking dimension. This result may be attributed to the fact that taking risk for academic leaders remains in its lower level, which is confirmed by the results of Aldosary (2016) and Alsarhan & Almekhlafi (2019). Those current study respondents who stressed that the dimension of Risk Taking for academic leaders needs to be encouraged and adopted as an integral part of their leadership studies show the reality of the application of this dimension is below the expected level. This might be due to the fear of negative consequences of their risky behavior which could ultimately have harmful effects for the institutions (Di Mauro et al., 2011). Thus, both kinds of universities should upgrade, learning and training in this dimension to reach a satisfactory level, as much of the entrepreneurial leadership research to date has determined is essential to be effective as an entrepreneurial leader of higher education, particularly when they are dealing with risks that suddenly occur. Taking risks is a fundamental trait for entrepreneurial leaders at any organization (Baron, 2007; Markman and Baron, 2003) as Peter Drucker (1970) points that "entrepreneurship is about taking risk".

Regarding the occupation in the higher educational field, the study findings demonstrate that there are no significant differences in the average perceptions of the perceived concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership among academic leaders attributed to occupation as a whole and for the three dimensions Visionary, Innovation and Risk Taking. This result not agree with Alnfaie (2012)'s finding where there were significant differences regarding the entrepreneurial strategies that can be attributed to the occupation in favor of dean and vice dean. As for the dimension of Proactiveness the result shows a significant difference in the average perceptions among Department Chairs and Vice Department Chairs in favor of Department Chairs. This latter difference may be attributed to the fact that Department Chairs have the power to make decisions more than Vice Department Chairs. This is attributable also since experience shaped their personality to be proactive and be more aware of adopting the dimension of Proactiveness. Indeed, leaders in higher education delegate tasks to different departments. Each department is managed by a designated chair who oversees the unit and is answerable to top management. This subdivision in position enables the different departments to work towards a common goal, and as a result, the institution effectively recognizes its objectives (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, & Huang, 2018). Saeed and Ibrahim (2016) observe that institutions select their departmental leaders exclusively based on merit and delivery strategies. Therefore, no significant differences could be perceived upon evaluating the dimensions of innovation, change adaptation, emergency response, and risk management. On the other hand, Saeed and Ibrahim (2016) outline that proactiveness varies from one department to the other mainly due to the leader's method and the gender setup of the team within a particular unit. The dimension highlights that female entrepreneurs react differently to change when compared with their male counterparts who exhibit a strong ability to deal with it. Therefore, it is fundamental to have a blend of both genders for stable operations.

Finally, no significant differences were apparent in the average perceptions of the perceived concepts of the entrepreneurial leadership among academic leaders attributed to experience as an academic leader in higher education, and also for the four dimensions Proactiveness, Visionary, Innovation and Risk Taking. This result aligned with Alsarhan & Almekhlafi's (2019) findings where there were no significant differences among academic leaders regarding the reality of entrepreneurial leadership dimensions that can be attributed to years of experiences. Martindale, Olate, and Anderson (2017) observe that experience is the principal factor that determines whether a person qualifies for hiring or not. Furthermore, specialized knowledge is a vital requirement when applying for employment vacancies. In most cases, an institution looks for a suitable candidate to fill a position and will consider a person with more years of experience. However, a five-year experienced leader can perform beyond expectations as opposed to a person with over ten years of experience in the field. Hence, leadership focuses on skills, personal traits, and the ability to economically achieve the establishment's goals.

Conclusion

Overall, this study found that academic leaders at Saudi universities moderately perceived the concepts of entrepreneurial leadership. Particularly, academic leaders at Saudi universities highly perceived the dimension of Visionary and moderately perceived the dimension of Innovation, Proactiveness and Risk taking, respectively. The findings have not shown significant differences in the average perceptions among academic leaders regarding their perceived concepts of entrepreneurial leadership that can be attributed to gender, occupation, and leadership experiences as a leader in higher education as a whole except the variable of university type, where the study revealed significant differences in favor of established universities.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, academic leaders at Saudi Universities moderately perceived the concepts of entrepreneurial leadership. Therefore, the study recommends the need to adopt the concept of the entrepreneurial leadership as a modern leadership style and hold training programs, seminars and workshops within the university to raise awareness of the entrepreneurship culture and to build skills for all leaders, particularly for the entire culture to be accepting of risk taking so all leaders feel empowered to take risks to achieve visions. Also, this study recommends the creation of an annual award for and among all Saudi universities for the best entrepreneurial leader according to specific criteria. Additionally, taking advantage of academic leaders' higher perception regarding the dimension of Visionary to start entrepreneurial activities. Finally, adopting more strategies to encourage the dimension of calculated risk taking would be beneficial for the academic leaders at Saudi universities in order to reach the entrepreneurial position.

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دورية – علمية – محكمة

مجلة علمية تصدر عن جامعة الباحة