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PERCEIVED TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOR: A STUDY ON SAUDI UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Transformational leadership is vital factor that can support innovation and innovation related behavior. In spite of the importance of transformational leadership, there is a lack of empirical studies linking the transformational leadership and innovative behavior. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the direct effect of transformational leadership on innovative behavior. Based on previous studies, in this study the framework has been designed and the hypotheses were tested through the descriptive methodology, which depends on a questionnaire and sample of Saudi universities' employees. The response rate percentage was 60%. The findings of the study showed that there are high levels of perceived transformational leadership. Also, the study found that idealized influence and intellectual stimulation have impact on problems sensitivity, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and proactiveness; but the these factors have no effect on originality except intellectual stimulation. Moreover, the study showed practical implications to the decision makers and theoretical implications, beside suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Innovative Behavior.

INTRODUCTION

In the face of intense competition, creativity is a key to increase the competitive advantage of a firm. Creativity refers to the generation of novel and useful ideas concerning products, services, processes, and procedures in organizations (Amabile et al., 1996). Moreover, creativity may also mean employees using a range of their diversified skills, abilities, knowledge, views, and experience to generate new ideas for decisions making, problem solving, and completion of tasks in efficient ways. Therefore, creativity is widely practiced in the service industry because employees usually work in teams to contribute a shared understanding of the customer and design of service market. Indeed, leadership is a situational factor that exerts a strong influence on creativity (Scott and Bruce, 1994), and transformational leadership, in particular, has been closely associated with followers' creativity at the individual level (Höper, Muser, and Janneck, 2012; Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009). This is because when subordinates work in service jobs that do not explicitly requires them to come up with very new ideas and innovation, transformational leaders may inspire the subordinates to go beyond their abilities for providing better performance or better way of completing their roles. transformational leadership who influences followers by "broadening and elevating followers' goals and providing them with confidence to perform beyond the expectations specified in the implicit or explicit exchange agreement" (Dvir et al., 2002)

Innovative behavior is considered as employee's generation and introduction of novel processes, new products, or new services (Amo & Kolvereid, 2005). Individual innovation commences with the identification of problems and providing ideas or solutions. Innovative individuals generate “a prototype or model of the innovation that can be touched or experienced, that can now be diffused, mass-produced, turned to productive use, or institutionalized. Innovative behavior is a discretionary behavior that employees engage in to develop innovative ideas in regards to services supplied to customers (Hon, 2011). Employees in the education industry can show their service innovative behavior by reconfiguring activities in tour designs, improving the attractiveness, comforts, and safety on tour journeys, or improving the care, depth of experience, and humor in tour guides' activities

Problem Statement

A general review on leadership and innovation literature can found that there is lack of attention to the impact of transformational leadership on employee's innovative behavior. Despite the agreement on the important role of leaders in triggering employee innovation, little integration of leadership and innovation research is found in the literature (Nusair, Ababneh and Bae, 2012). Accordingly, this study aims to examine the role of transformational leadership on employee innovation. Pieterse et al. (2010) also found that transformational leadership predicts innovative behavior. Also based on Liang, Chang, Ko, Wei Lin, (2017), the individual's perception of supervisors' transformational leadership is closely related to his/her desired outcomes (e.g. Feng , Huang and Zhang, 2016; Afsar, Bdir and Saeed, 2014; Braun et al., 2013; Chun et al., 2009). Second, it is very necessary to know follower's psychological processes which translate leader behavior into follower action (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). Individuals' innovative behaviors in the workplace are the foundation of any high-performance organization; and thus, “the study of what motivates or enables individual innovative behavior is critical” (Scott and Bruce, 1994).

Clearly, there is a need to know the mechanisms and processes through which transformational leaders influence innovation enhancement behavior of their subordinates. Consequently, this study aims to give insights into the interplay between transformational leadership, and innovative behavior by examining the direct impact of transformational leadership on innovative behavior. This study contribution is in using the perspective of employees to examine how transformational leadership enhance innovative behavior in higher education sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership

leadership” is defined as the convincing ability of individuals who have leadership quality in order to make people in his environment reach the determined aim (Erdoğan, 2007: 486-487). The point to be considered is ability of actuation the people around him by means of convincing. Because many different descriptions were combined about leadership but many of these point out the same point. As the reason for this, the customer-based structure's acceptance rather than production-based structure can be shown. Voon et al. (2011: 24) define leadership as the interaction process which occurs between leader and other workers and the goal of which is reaching to determined aims of management. When another



description is examined, it is possible to see that leadership is mentioned as the skill to influence a group of people in order to get them reach their targets.

According to Kent (2005), the leadership is the process that is based on interaction between the leader and his followers, being effective of change and development of both and affecting their motivation and behaviors. So the leader is the person who leads his juniors to determined targets, motivates them to achieve the objectives, controls and coordinates their work (Erdoğan, 2007). He is the person that is followed or obeyed by a group of people whose aim is to realize their personal and merged group objectives.

Rad and Yar mohammadian (2006) prove this. According to the study, a leader who had participative leadership feature, failed to improve the company. The company stayed in the same point for a long time and couldn't show any headway.

Furthermore, it was revealed that, such kind of leadership behavior reduced the job satisfaction, enhanced worker turnover and shortened the range of burnout.

In corresponding this, the managers' supportive behavior on labor and preferring clearness in communication influence performance of workers in a positive way. The companies which possess leader managers in those characteristics have an improvement on job satisfaction.

Transactional leadership theories suggested an exchange of wants between leaders and followers (Avolio, 2007). Exchange theories as seen in the vertical -dyad linkage model and the multiple screen model show the behavior of the leader and follower as bargaining between the power to accomplish goals rather than the power over another individual (Bass, 1990).

Transactions may be tangible or psychic; but, these relations do not last long. Transactional leadership concerns itself with granting, rather than exerting power.

Burns first presented transformational leadership as an idea in 1978. Bass expanded Burns' concepts and principles (Northouse, 2004). Researches on transformational leadership reveal leadership style allows followers to rise to a higher level of performance than normally achievable. Transformational leaders are best at inspiring and communicating the organizational vision (Houghton & Yoho, 2012). Avolio (2007) reported a commonly held explanation: transformational leadership assists people to achieve their mission and to renew their commitment to specified objectives.

Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership happens when a leader inspires or alters his followers to trust the leader and to perform at a higher level to achieve the organizational aims. As reported by George and Jones (2005), transformational leaders transform his followers in three important ways:

Clearly, there is a need to understand the mechanisms and processes through which transformational leaders affect creativity enhancement behavior of their subordinates (Bass, 1999). Some researchers believe that prior research has not studied the impact of the influential processes of employee's psychological mechanisms and self-concepts on transformational leadership-creativity linkage (Shalley et al., 2004; Shin and Zhou, 2003). One especially promising psychological mechanism which may mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and creativity is psychological empowerment – an employee's cognitive state characterized by improved intrinsic task motivation, perceptions of competence and self-determination to initiate and implement work behaviors.



Transformational leaders are able to inspire their followers because of four unique but interrelated behavioral components – idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation (Bass and Avolio, 1996; Jung et al., 2003). The first behavioral component is further subdivided into two perspectives: idealized influence attributed and idealized influence behavior.

Dimensions of transformational leadership

According to Bass and Avolio (1996), transformational leadership has four dimensions, namely, charismatic influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation.

Individualized consideration

As previously mentioned, increased listening, prompt feedback and openness to suggestions within the team is necessary for effective performance. Consider that individualized consideration encompasses attentive listening, consideration of individuals as having different needs, abilities and aspirations, and time spent in coaching and teaching (Afsar, Badir and Saeed, 2015)

The behavioral component of individualized consideration (coaching and mentoring) focuses not only on the greater good of the organization but also the attention to the specific needs of individuals, where equity rather than equality is emphasized (Dionne et al., 2003). Transformational leaders recognize that not everyone is equal in terms of skills, experience, needs, and wants. Hence, time and attention are made for each individual to understand them personally and to help them influentially by tailoring assistance to each individual's abilities and requirements (Bass et al., 2003). Bass et al. (2003) further explained that as an antecedent to cultivating a learning culture, individualized consideration produces a supportive climate that fosters trust and learning within the organization.

Intellectual stimulation

Intellectual stimulation (promoting creativity and innovation) is the ability of the leader to inspire followers to “think out of the box” when solving problems thereby resulting in creativity and innovation. Transformational leaders do not encourage their subordinates to follow their instructions blindly but promote the thinking abilities of the subordinates by having them question conventional ways of doing things (Bass and Avolio, 1997).

Inspirational motivation

Inspirational motivation (articulating an appealing vision) is the leaders' ability to formulate and express vision that work teams or the entire organization can identify with from both the commercial and personal perspectives. This vision is operationalized at the individual level, and the process takes into consideration the capabilities of the individuals by considering the manner in which they can contribute to the vision and simultaneously fulfill their personal ambitions. Transformational leaders motivate their followers by using a variety of approaches such as emotions, logic, and career ambitions that are relevant and appealing to their individual followers (Afsar, Badir and Saeed, 2015).

Through inspirational motivation, the transformational leader uses symbols and emotional appeals to focus group members' efforts, thus encouraging them to achieve more than they would base on their own self-interest. When this leader offers encouragement in the process of



idea generation (Loon et al., 2012), his or her followers may be inclined to freely express and implement their novel work ideas.

Innovative behavior

Many researchers state that creativity and innovation are two different concepts in that creativity involves generation of new ideas while innovation includes both generation and implementation of new ideas (Amabile, 1996; Pieterse et al., 2010). As a multistage process, innovative behavior is defined as actions that search for, develop, and apply new ideas and solutions in the current situation. In this regard, studying innovative behavior at both the individual and the organizational levels is important because the former entails changes in organizational structures or processes (Mironet et al., 2004).

Innovation emphasizes a more complex process (see Janssen et al., 2004). It refers to an activity whose aim is to develop, carry, react to, and modify ideas. Similarly, others have emphasized that innovation has to do not only with the intentional act of generating new ideas, but also with the introduction and application of new ideas, all aimed at improving organizational performance (Janssen et al., 2004).

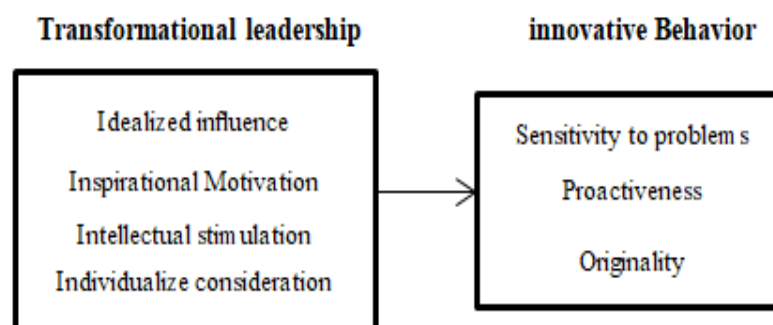
Innovative behavior is described here as a multi-stage process in which an individual recognizes an issue for which she or he develops new (novel or adopted) ideas and solutions, works to promote and building support for them, and generates an applicable prototype or model for the application and benefit of the organization or parts within it.

Transformational leadership and innovative behavior

There is paucity of investigation on the specific association between transformational leadership and innovative Behavior (Janssen, 2004). A number of reasons are suggested to support the assumption that transformational leadership positively affects innovative behavior. Afsar, Badir, Saeed, (2014), Burns (1978), Bass (1985) and Avolio and Bass (1995), suggest that transformational leadership is imbued with inspirational motivation, collective sense of mission, self-confidence, heightened awareness of objectives, exciting vision and aspiration. These aspects of transformational leadership arouse intellectual stimulation, intrinsic motivation, support for innovation and employee creativity (Elkins and Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009; Pieterse et al., 2010; Sarros et al., 2008; Tipu et al., 2012)

The current study has emphasized on existing literature for hypotheses development that need to be tested with the help of deductive reasoning approach and meet philosophical assumptions of positivistic paradigm proponents

Figure (1) the study framework



METHODOLOGY

Data were collected through self-administered survey method. Respondents were employees in Saudi public universities. The survey instrument was translated from English to Arabic (the national language), followed by the translation from Arabic to English, (Brislin, 1970). Then, by using convenience sampling method. Total 120 questionnaires were distributed among all the participants. In order to get a good response rate, telephonic reminders were sent twice. Finally, 80 completely filled questionnaires were collected making the net response rate of 60.0 percent.

Based on the most common conceptualization of transformational leadership (Bass, 1998), we assessed transformational leadership using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Felfe, 2006). This instrument measures the following five subscales with four items each: idealized influence: e.g. "My supervisor instills pride in me for being associated with him or her". inspirational motivation: e.g. "My supervisor talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished". intellectual stimulation: e.g. "My supervisor re-examines ways of doing things to see if they are up to standard". individualized consideration: e.g. "My supervisor spends time teaching and coaching". All leadership items were completed on a five-point frequency scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (almost always). Due to the high intercorrelations between the transformational leadership subscales (Heinitz et al., 2005), also the innovative behavior measured by three dimensions: Sensitivity to problems e.g. "If I have a problem working, look in more than one direction for unconventional solutions."; proactiveness: The leader exercises all tasks and tasks on his own initiative; and Originality: "I have the ability to do my work in a new way."

Factor analysis of Transformational Leadership variables

Factor analysis was done on the twenty items, which was used to measure **Transformational Leadership** constructs. Table 4.3 shows that the items for **Transformational Leadership** variables loaded on five components/factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0. These three factors explain 71.74% of variance in the data (above the recommended level of 0.60). All the remaining items also had the factor loading values above the minimum values of 0.50, with value of cross loading less than 0.50.

Table 1. Rotated Factor Loading for Transformational Leadership variables

Items No:	Components			
	1	2	3	4
My supervisor instills pride in me for being associated with him/her.	.775	.055	.167	.264
My supervisor goes beyond self-interest for the good of the group.	.717	.217	.187	-.094
My supervisor acts in ways that builds my respect	.691	.349	.089	.074
My supervisor displays a sense of power and confidence	.670	.117	.087	.002
Inspirational motivation				
My supervisor talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished.	.128	.757	.263	-.036
My supervisor talks about a great vision of the future.	.294	.756	.160	.362
My supervisor expresses confidence that goals will be achieved.	.138	.741	.364	.194
My supervisor talks optimistically about the future	.373	.714	.118	.252

Intellectual stimulation				
My supervisor re-examines ways of doing things to see if they are up to standard.	.163	.123	.833	.236
. My supervisor gets me to look at problems from many different angles	.108	.161	.780	.151
My supervisor seeks differing perspectives when solving problems	.216	.360	.664	-.078
My supervisor suggests new ways of looking at how complete assignments	.183	.349	.712	.165
Individualize considerations				
My supervisor spends time teaching and coaching.	.095	.137	.091	.817
My supervisor considers me as having different needs and abilities from others.	.136	.264	.154	.779
My supervisor helps me to develop my strengths	.108	.161	.171	.658
My supervisor sees me as having different aspirations from others	.216	.360	.213	.701
Total Variance Explained (%)				71.74
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)				.836
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity				958.549

Factor Analysis of innovative behavior Variables

Table 4.4 shows that the items for Customer Loyalty loaded on two components/factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0. These three factors explain 65.36% of variance in the data (above the recommended level of 0.60). All the remaining items also had the factor loading values above the minimum values of 0.50, with value of cross loading less than 0.50. The first factors of innovative behavior captures four items out of five and the second factor captures four items out of five, and the third one four factors.

As shown in Table 4.4, factor loading innovative behavior items are present in three factors.



Table 2. Factor analysis of innovative behavior.

Variables	Factor 1		
Sensitivity to problems			
If I have a problem working, look in more than one direction for unconventional solutions.	.843	.203	.301
Look for everything that is new and put more than one solution to the problem.	.838	.094	.076
Use different ways of thinking about problem solving.	.741	.303	.305
I have the ability to infer the causes of problems.	.722	.369	.389
I have the ability to predict problems before they happen.	.766	.301	.300
proactiveness			
The leader exercises all tasks and tasks on his own initiative.	.053	.845	.163
The opinion is presented as a nominal goal to develop the action steps.	.225	.736	.108
Provides innovative and unusual solutions to problems.	.298	.713	.216
I encourage the ideas of subordinates and if they are strange.	.398	.635	.163
Originality			
I have the ability to do my work in a new way.	.245	.301	.753
Keep away from repeating what others do in solving business problems.	.381	.210	.661

I am keen to know the shortcomings and weaknesses in the work I do.	.309	.289	.862
I have the skill in discussion and dialogue and have the argument and the ability to convince.	.269	.334	.701
Variance explained	65.36		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.830		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	319.649		

Reliability Analysis

Reliability is an investigation of the degree of consistency between several measurements of variables. To test reliability, this research utilized Cronbach's alpha as a diagnostic measure, which determines the consistency of entire scale, since being the most widely used measure. Based on Hair et al. (2010), the lower limit for Cronbach's alpha is 0.70, although it may reduce to 0.60 in exploratory research. While Nunnally (1978) considered Cronbach's alpha values more than 0.60 are to be taken as reliable.

The results of the reliability analysis summarized in Table 3 confirmed that all the scales reveal satisfactory level of reliability (Cronbach's alpha exceed the minimum value of 0.60). Hence, it can be concluded that the measures have acceptable level of reliability.

Table 3: Reliability

Construct	Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation
Transformational Leadership	Idealized influence	4	0.756	3.80	.816
	Inspirational Motivation	4	0.882	3.87	.803
	Intellectual stimulation	4	0.761	4.00	.842
	Individualize consideration	4	0.729	4.02	.964
Innovative behavior	Sensitivity to problems	5	0.743	3.89	.886
	Proactiveness	4	0.843	3.90	.964
	Originality	4	0.763	3.95	.886

Descriptive Analysis of Transformational Leadership variables

Table 4.6 shows the means and standard deviations of the four dimensions of transformational leadership variables: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The table reveals that the transformational leadership emphasized more on inspirational motivation (mean=3.89, standard deviation=.803), followed by idealized influence (mean=3.69, standard deviation=0.816), and then intellectual stimulation (mean=3.67, standard deviation=0.842), followed by Proactiveness (mean=3.49, standard deviation=0.886), and Sensitivity to problems (mean=3.42, standard deviation=0.964).

Correlation Analysis

Table 4.8 presents the results of the intercorrelation among the variables. The correlation analysis was conducted to see the initial picture of the interrelationships among the variables of the study. Therefore, the importance of conducting correlation analysis is to identify any potential problems associated with multicollinearity. Table 4.10 represents the correlation matrix for the constructs operationalized in this study. These bivariate correlations allow for preliminary inspection and information regarding hypothesized relationships. In addition to

that, correlation matrix gives information regarding test for the presence of multicollinearity. The table shows that no correlations near 1.0 (or approaching 0.8 or 0.9) were detected, which indicate that multicollinearity is not a significant problem in this particular data set.

Table 4. Person's Correlation Coefficient for All Variables

Variables	Idealized influence	Inspirational Motivation	Intellectual stimulation	Individualize consideration	Sensitivity to problems	Proactiveness	Originality
Idealized influence	1.00						
Inspirational Motivation	.663**	1.00					
Intellectual stimulation	.555**	.568**	1.00				
Individualize consideration	.524**	.552**	.430**	1.00			
Sensitivity to problems	.614**	.651**	.576**	.544**	1.00		
Proactiveness	.324**	.341**	.237*	.126	.254*	1.00	
Originality	.330**	.297**	.437**	.265**	.285**	.571**	1.00

** p < .01 * p < .05 ** p < .01 * p < .05



The Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Innovative behavior

This section deal with the first hypotheses in the study which predicts that five transformational leadership variables with innovative behavior (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualize consideration) have positive relationship with the innovative behavior.

The results also showed that intellectual stimulation have the most significant effect on innovative behavior (sensitivity to problems) ($\beta=0.365$, $p<0.000$), and idealized influence ($\beta=0.343$, $p<0.05$), followed by inspirational motivation ($\beta= -0.290$, $p<0.07$), followed by individualized consideration ($\beta= -.285$, $p<0.065$).

Table 5. Transformational Leadership and Innovative behavior (Sensitivity to problems).

Variables	Sensitivity to problems	Sig
Idealized influence	.343	0.05
Inspirational Motivation	.290	0.07
Intellectual stimulation	.365	0.000
Individualize consideration	0.285	0.065
R²	.187	
Adjusted R²	.095	
ΔR^2	.187	
F change	3.08	

Note: Level of significant: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0

The Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Innovative behavior (Proactiveness)

The results also showed that intellectual stimulation have the most significant effect on innovative behavior (sensitivity to problems) ($\beta=0.365$, $p<0.000$), and individualized consideration ($\beta=0.320$, $p<0.04$), followed by inspirational motivation ($\beta= -0.330$, $p<0.05$), followed by idealized influence ($\beta=0.185$, $p<0.67$),

Table 6: Transformational Leadership and Innovative behavior (Sensitivity to problems)

Variables	Proactiveness	Sig
Idealized influence	.185	0.67
Inspirational Motivation	.330	0.054
Intellectual stimulation	.378	0.05
Individualize consideration	.0320	0.04
R²	.187	
Adjusted R²	.095	
ΔR^2	.187	
F change	3.08	

Note: Level of significant: * $p<0.10$, ** $p<0.05$, *** $p<0$



The Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Innovative behavior (Originality)

The results also showed that intellectual stimulation have the most significant effect on innovative behavior (originality) ($\beta=0.344$, $p<0.053$), and individualized consideration ($\beta=0.285$, $p<0.062$), followed by inspirational motivation ($\beta= 0.243$, $p<0.073$), followed by individualized consideration ($\beta= 0.167$, $p<0.449$),

Table 7: Transformational Leadership and Innovative behavior (Sensitivity to problems)

Variables	Originality	Sig
Idealized influence	.243	.073
Inspirational Motivation	.167	.449
Intellectual stimulation	.344	.053
Individualize consideration	0.285	0.062
R²	.187	
Adjusted R²	.095	
ΔR^2	.187	
F change	3.08	

Note: Level of significant: * $p<0.10$, ** $p<0.05$, *** $p<0$

DISCUSSION

This study has examined the links between transformational leadership (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualize consideration), and innovative behavior. The framework was tested on a data set comprising 80 employees from Saudi universities. The empirical findings revealed the following:

The results demonstrated that transformational leadership (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration) is positively associated

with innovative behavior. This finding is consistent with the results of Afsar, Badir, and Saeed, (2014).

Transformational leaders delegate authority, and encourage participative decision making, making employees feel empowered to perform tasks with high degree of collective identity and cohesiveness (Jung and Sosik, 2002). They quite often alter organizational processes and systems to achieve exciting future; delegate authority to employees to come forward and accept responsibility; and seek them to a higher level of commitment by providing flexibility to make decisions about their work contexts. By giving personal consideration to employees, and helping them toward realization and evolution of their goals, transformational leaders are able to empower them psychologically.

Theoretical implications

The findings of this study help to understand deeper the antecedents of innovative behavior among employee. Transformational leadership fosters employee's problem sensitivity as well as his/her ability to convince others to implement original ideas. Transformational leaders They stimulate intellectual abilities of employees and inspire them to create innovative things.

Practical implications

The outcomes of this study are helpful to increase the innovative behavior through Transformational leadership in Arab culture. The finding also is useful for the decisions makers of the Saudi universities sector, consultants, governmental bodies.

Limitations and future research

Despite the fact that this study has several theoretical and practical implications, there are certain limitations. First, the scope of this study is limited to the public universities context, in Saudi, and data were collected at one point of time (cross-sectional), which may give misleading results if generalized to areas. In future research, it is suggested to collect data from a larger area and at multiple points in time. Second, in this study, data are collected through questionnaire, which may create common method bias and restrict the generalizability of the study.



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