

The Competent Leaders of the Saudi Non-Profit Organizations

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Abstract

To attain Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030's goal of developing leadership, we need to understand the key issues that have emerged in the context of learning skills relating to leadership in non-profit organizations (NPOs) to enhance their efficacy for management positions. This study elaborates upon the relevant abilities of leaders of NPOs. A qualitative approach involving interviews with 15 directors from renowned non-profit Saudi organizations was used. These 15 leaders, together with 6 other employees from NPOs participating in a focus group, were the primary informants. The study involved semi-structured interviews with professionals from non-profit sectors such as education, health, environmental sustainability, and human resources to summarize critical elements that either help facilitate or negatively affect these individuals' ability to contribute to institutional results. The results revealed six competency groups – namely personal, management, social, industry-specific, work-specific, and academic – which demonstrated the usefulness of the approach in gaining useful insights that would otherwise not have emerged. The results indicate that leaders of NPOs should exhibit these six levels of competencies to counter internal and external difficulties, and to effectively contribute to achieving organizational goals.

Keywords: leadership competencies, nonprofit organizations NPOs, Saudi Arabia, vision 2030, qualitative research

1. Introduction

The concept of leader competence has become a common area of research in the area of assessing and developing organizational performance. Its application to the assessment and development of leaders reinforces specific approaches to thinking and behaving, although in the end it limits organizational ability to cope with more collective and inclusive types of leadership (Bolden & Gosling, 2006). Leadership competence deals with the complicated relational processes as well as the ethics of creating responsibility in organizations at a collective level, while approaches based on the competency of leaders tend to neglect more nuanced ideas based on the relational and emotional roles of leadership. Miller et al. (2001) identified two main areas where organizations seek to garner and exploit (leader) competencies. Firstly, to help improve employee performance through appraisal, training, and other operational procedures, and secondly to articulate corporate goals and values (Bolden & Gosling, 2006).

According to most studies, no clear understanding exists in terms of what makes leaders stand out against non-leaders, or what distinguishes leaders who are effective than those who are not, as well as effective from ineffective organizations (Gee et al., 2023; Megheirkouni, 2017). This is a major factor in the process of leadership development in most firms, and two different views on leadership development exist, based on individuals and organizations. The development of leadership at individual levels involves experiences and activities that enhance skills and knowledge to provide the chance for staff to grow and to improve the running of their organization (Chouhan & Srivastava, 2014). At organizational level, the development of leadership entails professional and personal development that allows workers to stabilize, develop and transform organizations (Mohamed Jais et al., 2021; Katsinas & Kempner, 2005).

Many studies have addressed the question of whether normal corporate strategic leadership theories apply to organizations in the non-profit sector. The job of the Chief Executive Officer differs from that of the Chief Business Officer, and personal roles and decision-making are some of the differences that exist between public and private executive roles (Gee et al., 2023; Phipps & Burbach, 2010). At a strategic level, core leadership

abilities relate to the ability to support three capacities within an organization. These relate to the ability to learn, innovate, and alter managerial capacity (Phipps & Burbach, 2010). However, because a great deal of relevant research took place in profit-making corporations, the actual process of assessing the abilities of leaders in NPOs has rarely been studied. Hence, we need to identify and define the competency models for leadership in non-profit organizations and look at why they are adopted in order to address current levels of leadership competency in such organizations.

There is a more specific lack of research into leadership competency in non-profit organizations in the context of Saudi Arabia (Masoud & Basahal, 2023; Mortensen et al., 2022; Shahin & Al Suliman, 2022), and this study will attempt to bridge this gap in research by examining the growth of Saudi (non-profit) organizations and searching for specific competencies in terms of leadership that can be adapted to the organizational needs for Vision 2030 irrespective of size or sector. A framework of competencies for leadership in non-profit organizations NPOs based on a summary of such positions in the non-profit sector could then stand as a basis for management to develop efficacious practices in the Saudi Arabia of the future. Therefore, this paper first examines the literature on leadership competencies in general and in non-profit organizations. The third section looks at the methods used in this research. The fourth section presents the findings of the research, focusing on the identification of six key themes. The subsequent section presents a discussion of results, implication of the findings over and above concluding the discussion. In the final section, limitations and recommendation for further research areas are identified.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Leadership Competencies

This study follows Storey's (2016) research which categorized leadership competencies into three categories, namely making sense of the big picture, leading change, and inter-organizational representation. Leaders with strong inter-organizational representation competencies are expected to take the lead in networked contexts (Jokinen, 2005). Because of the variability and the rapid changes in the environment that surrounds non-profit organizations, leaders often need to realize, manage, shape, align, react, and lead change under situations of greater risk and uncertainty than the past (Benington and Hartley, 2009). Higgs (2003) distinguished six major schools of thought based on traits, behavior, contingency, vision, emotional intelligence, and competence. Leadership, according to these new approaches, represents a combination of personal areas of competence and individual characteristics. According to Goleman (2004) the best leaders, despite their diverse leadership styles, share the characteristics such as motivation, passion, self-awareness, social skills, and empathy. In other words, a leader is defined by his or her knowledge and skill sets, such as achievement and empowerment, as well as personal attributes such as competency and intuitiveness. The idea of competency is based on two assumptions: firstly, that those who excel in the same role will show similar behavior, and that this behavior can be learned to improve weaknesses (Bolden & Gosling, 2006). Secondly, when assessing managerial behavior, firms should turn their attention to boosting individuals' strengths and differences in order to focus on results rather than behavior itself (Balfour et al., 2021). Such leaders would then be able to play an important role in deciding organizational direction and should be integrated in the organization of non-profit bodies to achieve and maintain a level of excellence to prepare for and lead the path to success.

2.2 Leadership Competencies in the Non-profit Sector

Competencies have been defined using terms that describe personal characteristics in terms of behavior, values, skills, and knowledge, and many of the current paradigms are a combination of these (Jokinen, 2005). Leadership competency in non-profit organizations and skills at individual levels involves determining specific competencies in terms of knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and necessary skills to achieve goals of the organization (Phipps & Burbach, 2010). Leaders of modern NPOs must manage staff in a way that transforms challenges into possibilities at every level, using competencies that include critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, and knowledge, as well as social skills, (Balfour et al., 2021; Hess & Bacigalupo, 2013).

Two behavioral aspects of senior management valued by non-profit corporations have been identified as role clarification and persuasive direction (Peterson & Van Fleet, 2008). Using these approaches can help senior managers to effectively institute change. Studies have found that commercial organizations value this kind of behavior in times of crisis, while non-profit organizations value them in times of stability as well, implying that the process of developing the capacity for change might be completely different in NPOs (McMullin & Raggio, 2020; Phipps & Burbach, 2010). The creativity, flexibility, risk awareness and adaptability of leaders are also seen as processes. According to McDaniels (2002), leaders should be able to tolerate ambiguous processes and systems and should not be afraid of accepting reasonable levels of risk. Such leaders will be transformational and

resourceful and be able to fully understand and address public social needs.

In terms of implications for the competencies of managers in non-profit organizations, non-profit leaders should concentrate on communication and challenges involved in constructing an organization effectively using fewer opportunities for training, volunteers, and fewer resources (Masoud & Basahal, 2023; Phipps & Burbach, 2010). However, leadership and management competencies at present are typically derived from the evaluation of professional roles, with little regard for how they might be used for company or individual development or the assessment of others (Bolden & Gosling, 2006). There is a need for competent leaders with a generic set of abilities, irrespective of the nature of the setting, although task management focuses on employees' past as well as current performance without considering future needs. Becoming more competent relies on measuring behavior rather than searching for hidden assets, while objective measures will not be able to understand the subjective experiences of leadership (Megheirkouni, 2017). Leadership competencies in both experienced and inexperienced leaders could be used to understand competencies and explore those required for NPOs.

3. Research Methods

A qualitative interpretive research design was used to investigate leadership competencies and the purposes for which they are used in NPOs in the Saudi Arabian context. The study necessitated an understanding of participants' perspectives of the competencies of leadership that their organizations require. More specifically, this research used a research design based on phenomenology. Phenomenology is a subject that explores actual experiences and examines perspectives from the perspective of the people who are directly experiencing them (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This approach to design is especially relevant as the focus of the study can be to understand the empirical experiences of the non-profit leaders. To underscore the research, face-to-face interviews gave the researchers the opportunity to discuss more specific experiences of participants.

3.1 Data Collection

For this study, individuals were chosen based on two criteria: firstly, their background and a strong understanding of the idea of leadership competency, and secondly their contributions in terms of leadership to their non-profit organizations at national and global levels. Choosing such interviewees is important for two reasons. Firstly, their leadership position necessitates the use of competencies that are best suited to specific positions and duties in leadership. Secondly, the interviewees are able to understand and explain how and why they require such competencies based on their experience in various leadership roles.

The study used semi-structured interviews and a two-part interview process. The first part of the interview included questions that strengthened the relationship between the participant and the interviewer (Musselwhite et al., 2007). After this, specific questions were introduced to discuss the study topic. The interviews included questions such as "What is the role of leadership behavior, and why are capabilities perceived as critical for your organization?", "What leadership skills are most appropriate for non-profit organizations?" and "What leadership competencies are required for all Saudi non-profit leadership positions?" Interviewees were asked to explain the reasons for their replies.

The interview included a set of prepared questions as well as more generalized topics which were prepared in advance by the researcher. Further questions and follow-up material were added, if necessary, on an ad hoc basis as the interviews progressed (Creswell & Poth, 2016). At the end of each interview, the researchers noted down themes and ideas discussed. Based on these notes, the researchers concluded that after fifteen interviews, further interviews would not yield any additional insights as the point of theoretical saturation had been reached. The researchers avoided contacting subjects who had no leadership experience to prevent any divergence in opinions between those with no experience and those with experience. This is because the study's purpose was not to compare competencies in leadership between different roles based on the experience or lack of such of leaders, but instead to identify, understand and explore the competencies that were most important and to identify how they could be used in non-profit organizations based on the evidence of leaders from various positions in non-profit sector to construct a better picture of necessary competencies for leadership.

3.2 Participants

Data was collected during the first two months of 2023 through the use of interviews with fifteen nonprofit leaders. These semi-structured interviews included ten males and five females who held CEO positions in NPOs. Table 1 shows the background demographics of these participants. NPOs support planning activities for fundraising, but foundations are often set up using endowment funds provided by individuals, families, or corporations who generally make grants or run programs with income earned from endowment investing.

Table 1. Participant demographics

Participant Number	Gender	Position	Qualification
1	Female	Executive Director of the Association	Master
2	Male	Executive Director of Foundation donor	Master
3	Female	Executive Director of Nabta Groups	Master
4	Male	Chairman of the Board of Directors of the International Association for Islamic Endowments Complex for Education and Culture Germany	Master
5	Male	Current Vice president of the Association	Master
6	Male	Executive Director of the Foundation	Master
7	Female	Executive Director of the Association	Master
8	Male	Operational Executive Director of the Association	Master
9	Male	Member of the Board of Directors of the Holding Company	Master
10	Female	Executive Director of an academic institution	PhD
11	Male	Executive Director of the Foundation	Master
12	Male	Executive Director of the Association	PhD
13	Male	The President and Member of the Board of Directors of the Association	PhD
14	Male	The President and Member of the Board of Directors of the donor	PhD
15	Female	Executive Director of the Association	Master

3.3 Data Analysis

Interviews were conducted in Arabic before being transcribed and then translated into English. The initial translations strove to preserve the idiomatic nature of the Arabic language and were used to code the responses. English translations were uploaded into an Excel file. The specific analysis technique that was deployed was a thematic analysis in six steps proposed by Creswell & Poth (2016). In the initial step, the researchers read and reread the scripts to familiarize themselves with the data, and then assigned codes to specific ideas represented by fragments of text. This process continued to a level at which no new concepts or codes could be identified. After the coding process, relational links between different codes were identified as categories. The researcher organized these into sub-themes which were then categorized into six more specific themes, namely personal competencies, management competencies, social competencies, industry competencies, specific work competencies, and academic competencies.

4. Findings

Six overarching themes/categories were identified as: personal competencies, management competencies, social competencies, industry competencies, specific work competencies, and academic competencies. To protect participants' identity, each interviewee was assigned a participant number, and whenever a direct quote from a participant is provided, the participant's number will be shown in brackets to signify who the quote was from.

4.1 Personal Competencies

Leaders' personalities can be divided into two higher order themes, namely passion and empathy. One important characteristic for leaders who work in non-profit organizations is to have a strong emotional drive to serve society. In many cases, this is linked to perception of dedication to the work of the organization and an ambition to make sure that work carries on.

Passion is involved with dedication to non-routine work because it is a distinguishing feature of work in the non-profit sector" [6].

"If this level of passion does not exist or if it is not preserved, leaders will not feel the ability to survive or continue" [9].

"A leader has a strong desire to serve others and serve the community. If these desires are not genuine, he/she will not succeed in running such a system" [5]

"I realized that when I look at this noble goal and ambition, success is not mentioned in monetary terms. It is measured in how much can I do for that person, and if that is not a part of leadership, I don't know what is" [8].

Empathy is another vital quality in leadership competence.

"Giving back and helping others is an important part. Empathy is not sympathy. The source of altruism is the feeling of need. Someone saves you. You know how the beneficiary needs this support. You like to help people when you have the ability to help others." [2]

"I see it [empathy] as very important. If I have assumed a position of leadership in the sector, regardless of how I got there, if I cannot empathize with my beneficiaries and if I cannot feel or communicate such empathy, then I am not doing my job properly. The night finds women and orphans and offers the ability to empathize and feel the problems of others, and this is very important, regardless of the form of your leadership in NPOs takes" [9]

However, a passionate and efficient leader today needs motivation and passion to serve as a basis for leadership.

"Today, the existence of a foundation of passion and desire to serve is the basis for choosing any leader today, and this is what differentiates this sector from others, because the sector needs leaders who have passion and self-motivation" [9].

"The human side of the leader must be present. Whether it is with employees or customers, leaders must have emotional and sensory intelligence for success" [10]

4.2 Management Competencies

Management involves two higher order themes: leadership vision and teamwork. Today, the non-profit sector has moved from a charitable outlook to a more developmental one based on sustainability, and the structure of non-profit organizations has been completely changed. Visionary leadership is therefore important in the non-profit sector, as well as leadership with the ability to foresee the impact of change.

"The need for competencies widens the horizons for charitable organizations and NGOs allowing it to work with the community to study its needs and progress, and this is very important, so leaders need to have its own resources to engage in social investment" [11].

"Today, for us as an association, we specialize in development rather than relief. I see that my job has changed the lives of the people I work with. For example, when presenting my achievements to the Board of Directors, I am interested in telling them about families that I registered in 2018. Today, their children graduated from university and became employees who no longer need help. This has been made possible for children who live in peripheral villages that are far from services. None of them have been dropped out from education, all of them joined schools based on the support they received." [15]

"What is missing is raising the level of leaders educationally and culturally and advancing their level of civilization so that they can prove their worth in the societies in which they live and participate. And if the level of leaders is raised culturally, educationally, and professionally in all these fields, they will be able to play a role in this society, and then after that they will enjoy the respect of society." [4]

However, in the role of leadership it has now become essential that leaders be more business oriented.

"We are developing leaders guided by Vision 2030 and based on the new strategy we are developing now, we need a fresh, educated and educated general association to be present with us in sufficient numbers. They will raise new leaders. They will raise people for them (for loyalty) to the country and for the love of the country." [13]

Meanwhile, leaders should also change their overall orientations and mindset.

"I started to look at ambition, and I wondered how my ambition is satisfied in a non-profit organization. I am not looking to be paid a yearly bonus for the work I do. I do this because I want to enable change, I'm not doing it for the money. the whole mindset has changed, just as the organization mindset has changed in that everything is guided by social value" [8].

Conscious leaders do not have any ego-based problems.

"Today, a leader knows that he will not remain in place forever. Organizations today are public benefit organizations, as they are not a family company. I will accept anyone who comes after me and pass on the ability to empower others, share knowledge, maximize rewards, and help others." [9]

Another participant linked the success in overcoming barriers and challenges as being linked to team competency.

"The leader works within the team. There is no organizational structure. Being a leader, I must serve everyone. My role is to overcome difficulties so that everyone can work" [3].

Moreover, working with limited (financial) resources can also be problematic.

"The financial compensation is really a big challenge. In order for a charity to have a CEO, I will hire

him for seven thousand. So (the payment structure) does not attract people to the job because it is better in the private sector where a CEO is hired for fifty thousand, and you say seven, eight, or even twelve for me, in any sector, even the government, so there is no comparison” [2]

In addition, the structure of the team should be streamlined.

“Agility in organizations makes them better, faster, and cheaper, and the best efficiency can be achieved with the least numbers in the most efficient way” [6]

“In order to succeed in the non-profit sector, continuous development, the selection of the appropriate work team, and the management of that work team is vital. Development is for the individual, the institution, the work team, and all employees, and follow-up must be made on developments and rapid changes that occur in the sector” [15]

4.3 Social Competencies

The third competence for successful leadership is the skill of persuading and influencing others. The ability to influence and persuade is a very important characteristic that is vital in any non-profit sector. Engagement is a cultural factor, which means that the behavior and values drive management, and leaders should act accordingly:

“Because in today’s non-profit sector we provide services as a social issue, or we either help people or introducing them to the same sector as a form of support or you are undertaking fundraising processes, all of which mean that you need to be able to persuade and influence people, whether they are legislators, donors, or volunteers, all of whom are needed to develop policy-making and regulations” [9]

“The leader is the one who makes the impact, but he cannot do it alone. Attracting him is based on basic competencies – his ability to plan and lead the team, as well as creativity and thinking” [11]

Leaders need to create a positive working environment.

“The idea of this organization is how to organize the recycling process, so changing behavior is very difficult. How do we change behavior into a positive and fruitful creation? The problem does not lie within the current framework of knowledge. Instead, the problem is the motivation that directs human behavior. Here, the problem is in the system of values we have. These values, complexities and ideas are what direct human behavior” [3]

“The culture of mixing comfort and professionalism at work is very important. The internal culture of building relationships with employees is vital. The advantages of work are that employees love the context, they love the spirit, they love what they do.” [3].

“The more leaders follow a systematic approach, the more they will develop a clear framework. The work is transformed into an operational plan, the plan is implemented, leaders learn how to develop the team, and how to accept others who may think differently. Learning outside the box is a skill that a leader needs.” [7]

The work of non-profit organization also needs to follow structured guidelines of government as well as the wishes of donors in order to perpetuate support, leaders need to induce a widespread conformance to such stakeholder expectations.

“The requirements of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Human Resources and the National Center and the demands of donors are part of the external challenges. So, the development of work makes the process more transparent” [5].

“Technological advancement means even the government has begun to deal with it through government platforms. We are the non-profit sector. Technology must be present constantly and internal work systems and technology work teams must evolve.” [15]

As a result, leaders need to teach themselves and learn on the job.

“Today, in order to be a successful leader, you must learn, and I have never stopped learning, no matter how much experience I have. I have intellectual flexibility that allows me to understand the other party and know their needs, and this includes emotional intelligence” [7]

“I’m still learning every day. I will never stop learning, which is one of the most beautiful things about this job; you never stop learning” [8]

“The self-learning of the leader is very important in this sector. Continuous learning, learning from

mistakes, learning from experiences, learning from other practices are all important as an incentive to enhance the quality of work and to grow” [9].

4.4 Industry-specific Competencies

This dimension of leadership competence has two higher order themes: first, coordination and integration, and second partnerships that are centered on the beneficiaries. There is a need for groups concentrating on different public sectors to be to be interdependent, and collaboration offers a stronger guarantee of safety through common orientation, Today, the non-profit sector has multiple levels, and the ability to form collective relations with each other and with external companies is a participatory process, in which for example an executive director measures impact while a non-executive manager spearheads social investment. One important aspect for a leader to work successfully in a non-profit organization is a full range of knowledge on how these connections are built and maintained.

“Investing in social impact, I need to understand investment and I need to understand financial issues and I need to understand cutting-edge financing tools and patient capital and running capital and I need to understand follow-up evaluation, all of which are technical aspects that belong to the job itself but are not relevant to who I am as an executive director and are more strongly connected with private foundations.” [9].

Leaders also need to learn to make an impact.

“If the executive director does not understand, doesn’t read the numbers, and does not understand the finances, it is better for him to go back and study them, and this is what his role means, what his position is. If you can’t even supervise the accountant while he is sitting on the finances, the executive director will not see the aspects we have, the existence of restricted and the unrestricted funds or what it is spent on (operational, public, and administrative expenses), so restricted funds are those that are spent on specific programs. The director is the one who balances everything and knows what the association has in it (the amounts involved, how quickly you should spend it, what is held in reserve, what campaigns are needed to increase it, and what things are declining. The executive director instigates makes new campaigns according to the need” [15]

“It must be the director’s duty to encourage and lead change, in terms of either a strategic transformations or changes that reflect other internal or external challenges. Either way, the leader must be able to organize transformation through the power of leadership” [5]

Leaders must frame sound indicators and targets to achieve organizational goals. Needs must be measured, so the leader must be aware of the real expectations of the beneficiaries, and surveys should be done to identify challenges and needs so that these can be monitored in the field. All initiatives, if they are accurate, must measure needs realistically. As soon as their goals and objectives are achieved, the leader also has the competence to know how to communicate with the stakeholders, including the beneficiary, the donors, the staff providing the service and the supervising authority.

“I must know where I fit in, where is my connection with all involved, what are their expectations and what do they need from me? If I do this survey, I can design the initiatives based on strategies” [7].

“The fruit of that experience and that work, and the last task was my presidency of the Supreme Council of Muslims in Germany and my presidency of the Islamic Coordination in Europe, which included Islamic action in many countries in Europe Under the banner of the Council of Europe, when I took on the work and responsibilities in the Supreme Council of Muslims in Europe. After twelve years, my conviction and my decision help me to work in any continuity as well as a solid base that does not depend on donations on a seasonal basis and does not depend on what might happen. It may or may not come, but the Islamic work must have a solid background to refer and upon which to rely” [4].

“The leader must have grown into the market over years of experience gained” [14]

However, another participant commented that:

“The existence of an investment for a specific asset means the idea of continuity and self-reliance on fixed income and spends from this income, and this also guarantees the donor, and the recipient is the independence of the institution in its decisions, because the activity is always dependent on the source of money, so if the source is an external source, the work is related to this external source, good or bad” [4].

“Partnerships are very important. There must be partnerships with other non-profit sectors, with the private sector, with government agencies, in order to perform our work in the easiest way possible [15]

In the non-profit sector, industry competencies are also centered on the beneficiary. Leaders in NPOs need to be aware of the nature of their relationship with beneficiaries as well as how to transform the beneficiary from being a mere recipient of the service to a participant in making the solution appropriate and sustainable, and thus be considered useful and beneficial in the longer term.

“The beneficiary needs to be part of the organizational framework and process, despite not being part of the organization itself. The goal of the organization is the beneficiary, not the organization itself” [9].

“The organization is a mediating body that will study the needs and observe the desires of the community and a group of donors who have wishes and aspirations for projects. It needs to be a trustworthy body that the beneficiary community entrusts with its needs. A leader sees what this need is and where the desire is to fill this need” [11].

“Forming ideas is part of the competency of leaders working in nonprofit organizations. Successful leadership creates new and different initiatives and helps the community in one way or another. I believe one of the competencies of leadership is understanding reality as well as understanding specific needs. Leaders must try to fill these needs appropriately by undertaking specific projects or working on individually sponsored initiatives that help the associations as well as the beneficiaries” [5]

4.5 Work-specific Competencies

The idea of work specific needs brings us to the fifth competency, which is the focus on specific performance. This dimension has two higher order themes: knowledge about relevant local auditing systems and the ability to measure the impact of social investment. The audit system must be seen to work and plays a vital role in governance. Specific processes must be followed up and monitored for the leaders and their teams. It is an executive director’s job to measure impact, while it is the job of a non-executive leader to specialize in social investment to make the most out of donors’ money.

“The correlation of the impact and its measurement is linked to determining the characteristics of the people who work in this field according to the directions of the institution, whether it is preserving the environment, helping people, or preserving education” [2].

“One of the tasks of administrative leadership is to measure impact, and the indicators for the success of the goals help measure impacts because they represent an important factor.” [5].

“In all jobs, I need an understanding of the subject, impact and evaluation, and follow-up, but the nature of the understanding is different, and the nature of the view differs in each area of the primary job. I need a good depth of vision as I provide services and I will put frameworks and systems into place. I will measure myself as a leader and the effect of my leadership through impact my organization makes, but in terms of social investment I need to know about tools and how they work. This helps link social investments with impact, especially in terms of predictive and dimensional measurements” [9].

“Our efforts are directed towards directing the donors’ money to the endowments that have been specified, and the management of these endowments is vital to us” [4].

“Under the umbrella of the environment in this organization, there are various programs for children. All materials are environmentally friendly, and recycling is part of our principles and values. We consider that if we instill value, behavioral change will follow, and we instill value by providing activities and entertainment.” [3]

“Documenting vision, performance, achievement, and success are specifications for future leaders in order to succeed in the NPOs. Documentation is vital. Leadership must be documented in terms of performance, vision, achievement, and successes. After all, success is very important.” [2]

“Leaders who want to provide institutional social work have a higher challenge. In charitable work, and we work under the name of humanity without any governance or institutionalization at work.” [7]

Achievement for leadership competency can be measured in many ways, such as:

“Winning the King Khalid Award for Excellence in Organizations for three years running. Graduation was won (rank 3-2-1) under the leadership of Tamkeen in the Third Sector, based on the empowerment of systems and work with the Ministry. How do we empower organizations? The employees of the organization now follow new strategies, new programs of vision, new goals. For our institution and others, we will make ourselves more self-reliant by diversifying the sources of income” [1].

Another Achievement for leadership can be.

“Display by choosing a character for each of these events. The painting includes a presentation or a summary of the event, and then the character that expresses that event to this day. This series will include perhaps 23 large paintings covering all Islamic countries and expressing Islamic history in this way, with each painting an accompanying book so that it remains in the possession of those who visit these exhibitions to refer to it in” [4].

4.6 Academic Competencies

This involves the ability to manage volunteers and dealing with the board of directors as well as the volunteers themselves. How can Leaders deal with volunteers when most of them do not take the wages. How do leaders retain the services of volunteers? Volunteer management is one of the most difficult and complex relationships facing non-profit organization leaders. Employees have contracts, and you can ensure their loyalty and retention by paying them well and looking after them. Volunteers are altogether different, and often work in adverse conditions. Managing volunteers is an art and a new and complex field that includes both challenges and opportunities.

“How can I increase the number of volunteers from 20 to 200 and improve work performance and the quality of experience” [2]

“Moral stimulus is required. I mean, is it possible that if I work, my name will appear on radio, television, as part of a program or an interview, or in a newspaper? Now that our sons and daughters see this, they will take volunteering as a love that can be cultivated within them. They must be excited enough to come and work with us for free.” [13]

To be educated and/or knowledgeable on how to attract and retain volunteers is crucial.

“Today, jobs, youth and active brains do not like to work in this sector because this sector is still considered less desirable compared to the private or government sector, as there is only financial stability in it. The non-profit sector is considered unattractive because the path is not clear and the work within it is not institutional. One of the biggest challenges is that you make qualified youth and graduates from the best Universities and convince them to work in this sector and give them the experience required for growth” [7]

“Building educational curricula is based on building gaps through the curricula, the local and global community, and addressing the differences between them”.[3]

“Service learning was one of my recommendations thirteen years ago. This is a science that develops volunteering. We need volunteering to be understood correctly here and in charitable institutions, and our association has 80% volunteers and 20% employees. Therefore, we need leaders to develop volunteers” [13]

“Skilled and well-equipped leaders in this sector must have the qualifications to understand all the inputs of this sector and must be fully educated. They must know about systems and forms of governance A successful leader in this sector must also be able to network” [7].

“There is a difference between an executive director and a leader. Leaders must be creative, rather than practical. They must be leaders. If they are executives, even if they are good ones, they will carry out their work by the book like a machine. Such people are not leaders. They will not develop the work. Creativity and creating opportunities are vital, so if the leader has the specifications of a creatively inspired CEO, we will call him a leader in this sector” [14]

“We have supported Islamic schools, putting Islamic schools from first year to high school in, for example, in Vienna, France, and in Britain. We have started five schools at this level over several years, and this support has always been for specific cultural and educational project in that school.” [4].

5. Discussion

Phipps & Burbach (2010) examined leadership in non-profit organizations and concluded that being employed in various settings requires various competencies. Meanwhile, Bolden & Gosling (2006) argued that leaders can learn competencies that may work in various contexts, concluding that these competencies should be based on experience and reflection. In a quest to explore the requisite leadership competencies for Saudi non-profit organizations, data used for this research were collected from 15 semi-structured interviews with Saudi non-profit leaders working in different organizations and one focus group. From this, a pattern of deeper underlying connections emerged. The study showed that a collection of leadership qualities in NPOs existed at different levels of leadership, including board members, presidents, and chief executive directors of different NPOs. The study also showed that the six categories of competence identified above were needed for effective organizational leadership, and that these competencies worked in different leadership positions. The idea that organizational effectiveness and leadership are interdependent was also supported and should be measured by the degree to which the organization's goals are achieved.

Personal competency was discussed in relation to non-profit leaders, who need passion and empathy to work effectively in this sector. Meanwhile, the findings also reveal that good management involves leadership, vision, and teamwork. The leader should be able to communicate, manage the team, and work with them. Today, aspects of passion and empathy are very important characteristics of leadership competencies that are necessary in any non-profit sector. If they do not exist or are not preserved, leaders will not be able to survive and continue strongly in their roles. Being able to empathize with the beneficiary and being able to communicate such empathy are also necessary abilities in non-profit leaders. If this is lacking, tension, conflict, and stress will be the eventual outcomes (Thorgren & Omoredede, 2018; Hess & Bacigalupo, 2013; Goleman, 2004).

In terms of management competency, the research also showed that management involves leadership guided by vision and teamwork. Here, the leadership abilities should be to communicate, manage teams, and activate roles in direction, engagement, and motivation. The leader also has to work on developing competencies, which means that he/she is often in a facility where employees have been working for a long period. The team therefore needs to be directed to implement the required actions by encouraging a strong team spirit and teamwork skills, and this is one of the capabilities of any successful leader that will make any establishment stand out, from large to small and regardless of position or sector. Leaders must facilitate all employees to achieve their goals. Today, for any leadership position to succeed in the non-profit sector, the most important motivating factor is the leadership of people and the retention of their ability to foresee potential impacts by introducing the correct evaluation and control systems. The more leaders work on their ability to encourage goal-oriented approaches, the better their chance of success will be (Jokinen, 2005; Bolden & Gosling, 2006; Taylor et al., 2014; Ziek & Smulowitz, 2014)

The third competency for strong leadership is the ability to influence and persuade, which is an essential leadership characteristic in any non-profit sector. The network of relationships is very important, and the leader's ability to understand others, as well as his/her ability to learn and develop himself/herself in order to be considered useful in the same framework of the process is essential. All intervention activities are based on the needs of the beneficiary and not on the organization itself, so the focus of the organization needs to be the beneficiary, rather than the organization itself. The ability to separate the two and the ability to design a participatory intervention with the understanding of the beneficiaries is very important, and a good leader will use qualities of creativity and innovation to understand the problem and find innovative solutions. Leaders need to learn continuously, learning from their mistakes and experiences as well as learning from other practices. This is important as it will act as an incentive to enhance the quality of work and to help the organization grow.

Industry specific competence stems from the know-how of the sector itself. Leaders who come to work in non-profit organizations should know what is going on in the sector they are working in. In terms of coordination, integration and partnerships that are centered on the beneficiaries, leaders must have integrated themselves into the market through years of experience. This is a very important characteristic of leadership competencies that are required in any NPOs, whose principal ambition is to enhance the service for the beneficiary and to ensure that the target of the service is actually using it to improve their lives. Fundraising is one of the sources of resource improvement, and the ability to develop these resources and manage financial planning, governance and disbursement is vital (Davis et al., 2009). Meanwhile, governance is an important aspect of leadership and management. Leaders must have the ability to manage and understand the requirements of governance, which involves disclosure and transparency in terms of financial statements.

Work-specific knowledge of how the sector works is the fifth category of challenges facing non-profit sector leaders, and staff retention is a big part of that challenge. Part of the role of the leader is to create other leaders within the organization, who may be able to replace him/her in the future. Leaders therefore need to create a work environment that stimulates employee dedication and creates benefits that can be material and moral.

Leaders must then work to retain these competencies. Measuring the impact of leaders in creating new jobs is a complex process, and usually means that specific processes must be followed up and monitored for both the leaders and their teams. Knowledge about relevant local auditing systems and the ability to measure the impact of social investment is also a characteristic of non-profit sector leaders, in order to ensure that non-profit organizations continue to do well. Governance is the most important aspect of understanding the systems of the government, and leaders must be able to manage and control all aspects of governance. This involves dealing with issues such as disclosure and transparency, as well as financial statements. This means that leaders now need to be more specialized.

Academic competency is the sixth category, and it relates to the ability to manage volunteers. There are three types of challenges involved here. The first is convincing people who work in non-profit companies of the potential for rehabilitation and growth. Ambitious people may not understand that non-profit organizations can offer them a career, which is often due to the image that the sector evokes, which is generally volunteer work and short term low paid opportunities. The second challenge is the ability to retain non-profit employees under these circumstances, as the non-profit sector lacks the advantages and benefits of working in the private sector. The third aspect of academic competency is empowering leadership competencies for women in the non-profit sector. Globally, 70% of the workforce in the non-profit sector are women. However, this is not the case in Saudi Arabia, and this represents a significant challenge. The non-profit sector is poorly represented for women here, and at the leadership level this needs to be understood and considered for various reasons. Part of the role of the leader is to create future leaders in the organization. Leaders today must therefore create an appropriate work environment that stimulates work and creates benefits that may be material and moral and retain the competencies of female volunteers and employees. Measuring the impact of leaders in creating new jobs is a relatively easy procedure, and there are some researchers who measure the impact of rehabilitation and employee creation in leaders.

6. Conclusion

The results of this research suggest that NPOs need to understand their environments specifically through the lens of the development of competencies of leadership that will enable their leaders, irrespective of their role and the resources they command, to succeed in their required roles. This study concludes that there are six groups of competencies that comprise a generic range of competencies in the non-profit sector. These are personal, management, social, industry and work specific, and academic competencies. The reason that these competencies need to be developed in NPOs is to cope with the internal requirements of each organization within the sector, and to help overcome the problems that surround the non-profit sector as a whole. The research found that understanding the whole of the non-profit sector will improve the quality of practices to guide changes in problem solving and decision-making processes in order to improve knowledge and creativity.

6.1 Managerial Implications

The results of this research have several implications for practitioners as well as researchers. Besides enhancing our understanding about the nature, scope, forms, and vitality of leadership competencies for the nonprofit sector, it offers interesting implications to the theory as well as the practice. The research findings underscore the importance and relevance of the six types of competencies mentioned above in the Saudi context. Meanwhile, the results of the study demonstrate the vital aspects of enhancing leadership skills in the NPOs. In order to yield potent contributions to the fulfillment of the key stakeholders in the nonprofit sector, leaders need to develop and exploit the six competencies outlined in this paper, namely personal, managerial, social, industry-specific, work-specific, and academic competencies. The study also recommends that service learning should be studied at university level. Meanwhile, fundraising is a specialty in educational organizations, and is a delicate specialization. Its future in the non-profit sector will require specialized leaders. It will not be useful to employ leaders who follow current paradigms, as they will not develop the sector in a way that improves it. There is a therefore a need for more scientifically trained leaders.

6.2 Limitations and Recommendation for Future Research

Most of the literature on leadership competencies in management uses quantitative approach, which limits the ability to compare the current study's findings with equivalent quantitative non-profit sector studies. Studying the ways in which such competencies are implemented in the NPOS is an interesting area of future study because it will help us to define the nature of programs for leadership development that are needed in this sector. Further studies should focus on how competencies can be developed in various positions of leadership in both public and commercial organizations in order to evaluate similarities and differences in all aspects of leadership competencies across all sectors. In the local context of Saudi Arabia, future research could investigate the management of Saudi firms' personnel and encourage the employment of women. Future research could also

look at exploring the competencies of leadership that are applied in non-profit organizations in different cultures.

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