Resilient Leadership: A Study Connecting Saudi Vision 2030 and the Higher Education Sector

By

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Abstract

Driven by Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia is currently undergoing a significant transformation that is characterised by extensive economic and educational reforms. As a part of this transformation, the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia aims to improve the quality of higher education, align it with the needs of the labour market and enhance its competitiveness with that of other developed countries. Throughout these efforts to achieve strategic national visions, new and unanticipated challenges may emerge. Resilient leadership provides organisations and institutions with the ability to effectively navigate the uncertainty that accompanies change. However, there is a lack of research on resilient leadership in Saudi Arabia's higher education sector. To address this research gap, this study aimed to explore the presence of resilient leadership among leaders in the Saudi higher education sector to achieve transformative strategic visions, specifically, Vision 2030.

The study uses a qualitative, case study approach in the interpretive paradigm. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 leaders, who held the titles of deans and/or heads of departments at three Saudi public universities. The study uses NVivo for thematic analysis, which involves building themes and methods to analyse data and to explore participants' perspectives. The findings of the study highlight the importance of resilient leadership in enabling university leaders to adapt to the changes that are caused by Vision 2030. To support Vision 2030, universities are aligning their courses and leadership practices with Vision 2030. Participants in the study employ various coping mechanisms to manage the stress that is caused by changes in the academic system. The study emphasises the importance of positive mindset practices and adaptive stress coping strategies for leaders who are facing change and pressures. In addition, sustainable social bonds, which create a safe and supportive environment in which team members can freely express their thoughts and ideas, are identified as crucial in higher education. Further, self-leadership is recognised as essential in Saudi universities because it enables leaders to manage their emotions, thoughts and behaviours, set goals, plan effectively and solve problems. Resilient leadership emerges as vital for higher education in Saudi Arabia, enabling leaders to navigate the challenges of change and, ultimately, achieve Vision 2030.

The scan of studies in Saudi Arabia shows that this study is possibly the first to introduce the concept of resilient leadership in the context of Saudi higher education. Hence, the findings hold significant value for policymakers and leaders in Saudi Arabia's higher education sector. By understanding the role of resilient leadership in achieving transformative strategic visions, they can better prepare the sector for the challenges and opportunities of the contemporary era. Policymakers are encouraged to modify existing policies to prioritise resilience training to equip leaders in the sector with the necessary skills to effectively contribute to the realisation of Vision 2030.

Student Declaration

I, Abdulrahman AL Shamlan, declare that the PhD thesis entitled 'Resilient leadership: A study connecting Saudi Vision 2030 and the higher education sector' is no more than 80,000 words in length, including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

I have conducted my research in alignment with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and Victoria University's Higher Degree by Research Policy and Procedures.

Ethics Declaration

All research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (Application Number HRE20-185).

Signature   Date

Abdulrahman Al Shamlan   21 August 2023

Dedication

To the loving memory of my parents,

Whose unconditional love and endless support continue to inspire me.

This work is dedicated to them as a tribute to their unwavering love and the profound impact they had on my life.

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I am grateful to my wife for sacrificing her own needs for me and providing unwavering support throughout this journey. In addition, I extend my gratitude to my sisters and my brothers who have always helped and encouraged me.

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Conferences and Awards Associated with this Thesis

Refereed Conference Participation

The 2022 Institute for Sustainable Industries & Liveable Cities HDR Student Symposium, 2nd December, 2022.

Awards received based on this Thesis

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

The Saudi Arabian government has placed significant importance on economic and social progress through its ambitious Vision 2030. The country aims to expand and vary its economy and higher education is one of the most important sectors that is facing rapid growth (Hamdan & Hamdan, 2020). Consequently, the achievement of optimal academic outcomes heavily depends on effective leadership within these educational institutions. Several studies (Ledesma, 2014; Patterson et al., 2009) have underscored the role of resilient leadership in realising strategic visions, a concept that this study explores in the context of Saudi Vision 2030. More specifically, the study investigates the prospects of applying resilient leadership in higher education institutions thus improving their capacity to smoothly transition into the future roles that are outlined for them by the Saudi government.

In 2016, the Saudi Arabian government published 'Saudi Vision 2030': a document that outlined the economic blueprint of Saudi Vision and the strategic goals that the country hoped to achieve over the next 15 years (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016). Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 primarily aims to reduce the overdependence on oil by diversifying the country's economy and empowering various sectors (Moshashai et al., 2020). In addition, the economic framework aims to develop public service sectors, which include tourism, infrastructure, health and education (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016). Changes in the education sector will contribute to the three themes of Vision 2030, which are a thriving economy, a vibrant society and an ambitious nation (Mohiuddin et al., 2023). The education system needs to produce career-ready students who meet the current job market demands and are adaptable to changes (Mohiuddin et al., 2023). In addition, the economic diversification initiative that is outlined in the country's strategic vision requires Saudi higher education institutions to produce highly knowledgeable and technically skilled workers who can compete with professionals from other regions of the world (Guendouz & Ouassaf, 2020). Proposed reforms in the education sector that are aimed at contributing to the realisation of Vision 2030 need higher education institutions to adopt leadership practices that support this initiative.

Allison (2012), Arond-Thomas (2004) and Drath (2016) posited that the challenges of today's world demand resilient leadership because resilient leadership can cope with stress and maintain optimism in the midst of crises. Hilton (2020) suggested that resilient leadership is the most effective leadership approach because it manages stresses, keeps optimism, builds teams to implement change and provides clarity in times of crisis. In the higher education sector, the challenges are enormous, including curriculum development, technological advancements, employability skills, student expectations, industry demands, government regulations, accreditation requirements and international competition (Sanaghan, 2016). Therefore, educational leaders that have resilient leadership skills, such as good interpersonal skills, positive attitudes and effective stress coping mechanisms, are highly effective in guiding higher education institutions and helping them to contend with the challenges of the modern education sector. In addition, a resilient leadership approach is more suitable in situations in which major transformations in an organisation's overall strategic objectives are desired (Patterson et al., 2009). The higher education sector in Saudi Arabia must undergo a major transformation if it is to align its strategic goals with those of Vision 2030. During this transformation, higher education in Saudi Arabia might face temporary setbacks. A resilient leader recovers quickly from such setbacks and ensures that the organisation stays on course and maintains focus on its ultimate goals. Thus, resilient leadership is highly effective at helping leaders to deal with temporary setbacks during the transformative phases of their organisations (Allison, 2012; Arond-Thomas, 2004).

Resilience is a dynamic capability that allows employees to thrive on challenges and to develop professionally (Howe et al., 2012). Vision 2030 focuses on various economic reforms and the creation of a knowledge economy. However, it is not possible to implement these reforms within the country without transforming universities. Nurunnabi (2017) suggested that the basic aim can be achieved if universities focus on their capacity to develop leadership, encourage creativity and innovation and enhance the leadership skills of leaders to work effectively in teams. These competencies, according to Nurunnabi (2017), are extremely important for the successful attainment of Vision 2030.

Furthermore, change is a complex phenomenon and one should expect disruptions during the implementation of change. For example, these can be resistance from employees, resource

scarcity, workplace conflicts and the inefficient use of resources (Bartone, 2017). Resilient leaders maintain a positive attitude and view turbulent times as an opportunity instead of a threat (Holmberg et al., 2016). Resilient leaders remain open to communicate and they frequently receive feedback from others to identify possible areas of improvement (Dartey-Baah, 2015). They are flexible to change the course of action if feedback and suggestions of others desire this (Allison, 2012). Saudi universities have to implement Vision 2030 to remain competitive but in doing so, they probably face uncertainties, disruptions and risks. However, given their positive attitude, risk-taking ability, decisiveness and trustworthiness, developing resilient leaders in Saudi higher education institutions can help the country to achieve Vision 2030.

To further posit the importance of this research, prior studies have indicated that extensive research has been conducted on resilient leadership and its application in various organisational environments (Brewer et al., 2019; Dartey-Baah, 2015; Grote, 2019; Wang et al., 2017). Resilient leaders are characterised as having the ability to always recover from setbacks, should any occur, without causing harm to others (George et al., 2013; Grote, 2019). Nevertheless, this study has revealed a significant gap in the existing literature concerning the exploration of resilient leadership application in higher education institutions, particularly in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Thus, in the current study, the importance of resilient leadership in higher education and the link to Vision 2030 are examined in detail.

Higher education institutions operate in an environment that features robust technological developments, globalisation and diversity in leadership. The dynamic conditions in higher education underscore the relevance of resilient leadership to effectively respond to and navigate these changes to meet the current industry demands (Lane et al., 2013). Institutions of higher education have been observed adapting new structures and practices to meet evolving global standards and to keep up with trends, especially those involving sustainability and innovation (Wasden, 2014). Higher education institutions in the KSA have adjusted their syllabi and management practices to match international standards and to align with the country's Vision 2030 (ALSharari, 2019). The success of aligning these institutions'

visions with those of the country is a challenging task that needs leaders to develop and maintain strategies that can overcome challenges that may arise during transitory periods.

1.2 Study Problem and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to explore the presence of resilient leadership among leaders in the Saudi higher education sector to achieve transformative strategic visions for the country, specifically, Vision 2030 (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016). This study is crucial for the development of the higher education sector, which tops the list of integral institutions for Saudi Vision 2030's aspiration to become a world-class economy (Alharbi, 2016). Saudi Vision 2030 presents an ambitious plan for overhauling the educational system (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016). One of the successes of this vision depends largely on reforms in the education system that are aimed at addressing the disconnect between Vision 2030 and the manner in which higher education institutions currently operate, which is largely attributed to ineffective leadership (Alghamdi, 2017). For example, inconsistencies have been observed in some of the curricula, programmes and course changes that have been introduced in response to Vision 2030 (Alghamdi, 2017), which seeks to create a prosperous economy, a fulfilled society and a forward-looking country (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016).

The higher education sector in Saudi Arabia lacks academic strategies for developing leaders' resilience, making it difficult to predict whether current and future leaders are adequately prepared for the changes that are associated with transformative strategic visions, such as Vision 2030 (Abu Alsuood & Youde, 2018; Alhammadi, 2018). The development of leaders' resilience is fundamentally important, as it empowers them to effectively tackle the challenges, uncertainties, and pressures in the ever-changing scenario of higher education. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the characteristics, behaviours and skills of resilient leadership in Saudi higher education leaders to achieve Saudi Vision 2030. Allison (2012) noted that resilience at an educational institution is in jeopardy if optimism, stress resilience, relationship-building and clarity are not reflected in leaders' behaviour. Although Gu (2017) showed that resilience across sectors has similar characteristics, in the education sector, coping effectively with stress, bonding well with other stakeholders, such as co-workers, students and the external world, and managing stress using an optimistic approach

are regarded as extremely critical to keeping up with the unique and complicated challenges of educational institutions.

Leadership plays a critical role in the achievement of strategic visions. More specifically, in the academic context, leadership development and training are of utmost importance in aligning institutional and government visions (Al-Swailem & Elliott, 2013). Gonaim (2019) suggested that higher education in Saudi Arabia generally lacks an understanding of leadership and leaders are not trained sufficiently to meet the challenges of the future given their leadership effectiveness. To address the importance of leadership in Saudi Arabian higher education, the country's Ministry of Higher Education established the Academic Leadership Centre in 2009 with the aim of increasing leadership effectiveness (Academic Leadership Centre, 2012). However, the question that needs to be answered is what leadership approach is suitable for implementing reforms and handling future challenges (Smith, & Abouammoh, 2013). Resilient leadership is the most effective leadership approach in turbulent, uncertain and challenging times (Holmberg et al., 2016; Southwick et al., 2017). Building characteristics of resilience among leaders can potentially help higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia to implement reforms and to effectively handle current and future challenges in the long term.

Prior studies (Allison, 2012; Ledesma, 2014; Patterson et al., 2009) have demonstrated the role of resilient leadership in achieving a strategic vision, this study is the first to link resilient leadership and the realisation of Saudi Vision 2030. Therefore, this study addresses the problem of the disconnect between the higher education sector and the challenges that hinder timely progress towards Saudi Vision 2030, for which maintenance of the status quo would amount to failure. It has been observed that leaders in Saudi Arabia's higher education lack the necessary leadership skills and practices to promote creativity, innovation and collaboration, hindering the effectiveness of their institutions to realise Vision 2030 (Alalshaikh, 2017; Gonaim, 2019; Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). Given that Saudi higher education leadership faces unprecedented challenges and changes in achieving Vision 2030 (Shafai, 2018), the role of resilient leadership in navigating the accompanying uncertainties and successfully achieving strategic goals becomes increasingly vital (Lane et al., 2013; Patterson et al., 2009). There is currently a dearth of research on the presence of resilient

leadership in higher education, particularly in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, no prior studies have linked the resilient leadership of those in charge of Saudi universities to Vision 2030. Consequently, this study attempts to address the gaps in the knowledge about existing resilient leadership in Saudi higher education leaders.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the research problem, the current study is guided by two specific research questions. The main question explores the presence and relevance of resilient leadership among leaders in the Saudi higher education sector to achieve Vision 2030. This primary question is further elucidated by a sub-question that delves into the traits, behaviours, and skills of resilient leadership and how they link to the achievement of Saudi Vision 2030. The exploration of this sub-question is important because it seeks to identify and understand the specific aspects of resilient leadership deemed to be essential for navigating the unique challenges and opportunities presented by Vision 2030. By understanding these qualities, the study can offer valuable insights for developing resilient leadership strategies tailored to the unique context of Saudi Arabia's educational reforms. Together, these questions endeavour to provide a deeper understanding of resilient leadership's potential impact on realising Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

Key Research Question
Is resilient leadership present and relevant in Saudi higher education leaders to achieve Vision 2030?
Sub-Question
How do the traits, behaviours and skills of resilient leadership link to the achievement of Saudi Vision 2030?

1.4 Contribution to Knowledge and Statement of Significance

This study contributes to the body of knowledge on leadership effectiveness by conducting a qualitative analysis that is focused on resilient leadership within the Saudi higher education sector to support the implementation of the national vision. To that end, the study explores the application of prevailing policies and leadership practices in higher education as a basis

for recommending alterations, improvements and innovations. Therefore, by furthering the understanding of the immense benefits of resilient leadership, the study encourages decision-makers to reframe existing higher education policies to promote resilience training, enabling leaders in the sector to contribute more effectively to achieving the objectives of the strategic vision. The interpretation of resilient leadership that can apply to the Saudi higher education sector can improve the prospects of achieving the goals and objectives that are outlined in Vision 2030.

In terms of Vision 2030, there is a strong visionary link between education and competitive economy. The Vision outlines the Saudi government's commitment to develop a modern curriculum emphasising strict criteria in literacy, numeracy, skills, and character enhancement. The government keeps tabs on progress and publicises a detailed array of educational results, reflecting annual advancements. The Saudi government collaborates closely with the private sector to ensure the outputs of higher education align with job market demands (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016). Vision 2030 calls for improved creativity and innovation, curricula and teaching methods and students' core skills and values as well as ensuring that students' education meets national development and labour market demands (Patalong, 2016). In this vision, it is expected that the goal of universities in Saudi Arabia is to align their objectives with current and future market needs and accordingly plan activities so that students can be better equipped with the necessary sets of skills that are needed at workplaces.

Specifically, in alignment with Vision 2030, the Saudi government is dedicated to reducing the discrepancy between the products of higher education and the prerequisites of the job market, along with guiding students in making considered career decisions while providing training and easing their transition across educational pathways (Yusuf, 2017; Yusuf & Atassi, 2016). These are challenging circumstances for Saudi universities. Leaders in the higher education sector face unchartered territories. Hence, the research on resilient leadership is timely. Resilient leadership is understood as an approach that manifests as performance orientation, change orientation, dynamism, a developmental nature and a positive attitude in challenging situations (Gu & Day, 2007). Therefore, the current study can inform universities to better facilitate the implementation of Saudi Vision 2030. Resilient

leaders recognise that a continuously changing mechanism exists for organisations and they need to adapt quickly to these complex and dynamic circumstances (Foerster & Duchek, 2017). Therefore, higher education institutions should embrace continuous changes at structural and individual levels to remain competitive and to succeed in the long term (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). The professional development of leaders in the Saudi higher education sector is one of the goals of Vision 2030 that can be achieved as a follow-up from this study because the study explores the application of resilient leadership in leaders of Saudi universities.

Driven by Vision 2030, the implementation of transformational change through an overhaul of existing policies necessitates extensive economic and educational reforms (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016). The current study aims to augment existing knowledge about the ways that resilient leadership can contribute to achieving this strategic vision. The hope is that the findings can assist policymakers in reframing existing higher education policies to promote resilience training thereby enabling employees in the sector to contribute more effectively to the objectives of Vision 2030. Despite the proven importance of resilient leadership, this topic has not been extensively explored by researchers. Although numerous studies have addressed the issue of overall organisational resilience by investigating the reasons that some organisations thrive while others do not (Southwick et al., 2017), less is known about the resilience of leaders. Therefore, this study addresses a crucial research gap and makes a significant contribution to the field of leadership by exploring resilient leadership within Saudi higher education, ultimately supporting the successful implementation of Vision 2030.

1.5 Structure of Thesis

This section presents the outline of this research in order to provide an overview of individual chapters. The thesis comprises seven chapters, which are outlined as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

The chapter provides an overview of the study by introducing its background and aim and the study questions and problem. This section discusses the contributions and significance of

the study, along with an outline of the chapter structure. The researcher concludes the chapter by summarising its contents.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter offers an extensive exploration of the relevant literature that is directly related to the study question. It includes key topics such as leadership, psychological capital, resilient leadership, vision, strategy, practice, culture, innovation and resilience.

Chapter 3: Saudi Context

This chapter provides the study context by presenting an overview of Saudi Arabia, the Vision 2030 plan and its objectives. It also includes an overview of leadership in the higher education sector of the country.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

This chapter presents an overview of the study methods that were employed in the study. The section explores the interpretivist paradigm and the concept of an inductive study, which served as the guiding principles for the study process. The researcher introduces the study approaches that were used, methods of data collection, sample description, data analysis and thematic analysis. In addition, this chapter addresses the aspects of validity, reliability and ethical considerations that are pertinent to the study.

Chapter 5: Findings

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the findings and themes that emerged from the case studies, specifically, Case Studies A, B and C. It offers a comprehensive analysis of the results that were obtained from each case study and concludes with a summary of the chapter's contents.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The discussion chapter delves into an interpretation and analysis of the research findings that were obtained from analysing the data of the three universities. This chapter critically

evaluates and compares the results with the existing literature. The chapter explores whether the research findings support or contradict current theories on resilient leadership. It elaborates on how these findings fit within the context of Saudi higher education and the overarching Vision 2030 goals.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The final chapter presents a summary of the main conclusions, contribution to knowledge and theoretical and practical implications of the study. This chapter discusses the limitations and provides recommendations and suggestions for future studies.

1.6 Chapter Summary

The introduction chapter of the study provided a comprehensive overview of the study and identified its problems and objectives. It highlighted the importance of resilient leadership in the Saudi higher education sector for achieving Vision 2030 and determined the existing research gap that the present study can address. The following chapter presents the literature review for the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the literature review establishes a robust theoretical foundation for the study, focusing specifically on areas that directly contribute to understanding resilient leadership in the Saudi higher education context. The scope of this review begins with a comprehensive examination of the evolution of leadership theories, including the personality era, influence era, behavioural era, situational era, contingency theory era, transactional era, transformational theory era, servant leadership and authentic leadership. This review sheds light on how these theories have morphed over time to address emerging leadership challenges and their contribution to the concept of resilient leadership. Understanding this historical context is crucial for grasping the current nuances of resilient leadership's relevance to contemporary challenges, particularly in relation to the changes in Saudi higher education to achieve the goals of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Moreover, the subsections help to explain and identify the traits, behaviours, and skills commonly associated with effective leaders. The section on resilient leadership assists in explaining the ways that leaders can navigate challenges and promote resilience in themselves and their teams.

Furthermore, the discussion on the relationship between leadership and vision, as well as that between strategy and resilience, highlights the importance of aligning these elements for organisational success. This is essential for understanding how strategic vision and resilient leadership are indispensable in steering Saudi Arabia's education sector so that it works to achieve the Vision 2030 objectives. Finally, the section on practice, culture, socio-ecological processes, innovation and resilience sheds light on the broader context and dynamics that influence leadership effectiveness. This holistic approach is vital for a comprehensive understanding of the external and internal factors influencing leadership effectiveness.

2.2 Leadership

In this section, an overview of leadership theories, the definition of leadership, the trajectories of leadership, leadership traits, leadership behaviours and experiences are addressed to understand the evolution of leadership from all these perspectives.

Early definitions of leadership focused on personal qualities; however, during the 1950s, Stogdill (1950, p. 3) defined leadership as 'the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organised group in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement'. This definition marked a shift towards leadership as a process and incorporated purpose, goal setting and achievement. The definition continued to evolve in the 1960s and 1970s, when Tannenbaum et al. (1961, p. 24) defined leadership as 'interpersonal influence, exercised in a situation and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals'. Burns (1978) described leadership as the process of persuading followers to achieve specific goals.

In the 1990s, Bass (1990, p. 19) defined leadership as:

> [The] interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of members … leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group. Any member of the group can exhibit some amount of leadership.

Ciulla (2002) stated that 'leadership is an influence relationship between the leaders and followers who intend real changes that respect their mutual purposes' (p. 340). The definition of leadership is not static and is subject to change depending on the context and situation that is being studied (Silva, 2016).

The various definitions of leadership throughout history provide a foundational understanding for the study of resilient leadership. For example, Tannenbaum et al.'s (1961) and Burns' (1978) definitions emphasise the significance of interpersonal influence and persuading followers to achieve specific goals, which are vital aspects of resilient leadership.

Bass's definition (1990) underscores the dynamic and adaptable nature of leadership, mirroring resilient leadership's need for flexibility and adaptability during times of adversity. Ciulla (2002) characterises leadership as an influential relationship between leaders and followers who aim for change, reflecting resilient leadership's essence of fostering a strong relationship with the team while navigating change. As Silva (2016) suggests, leadership definitions are subject to context and situation, a notion that reinforces the agile nature of resilient leaders. They navigate their teams through difficulties, adapt to evolving circumstances, and demonstrate agility in their leadership approaches (Giustiniano et al., 2020).

2.2.1 Trajectories of Leadership Theories

Stogdill (1974) noted that the term 'leader' has been recognised since the 1300s whereas the term 'leadership' has existed since the late 1700s. Moreover, scientific inquiry on leadership did not begin until the 20th century (Bass, 1981). Hunt and Fedynich (2019) noted that most theoretical ideas on leadership are borne out of the context in which they germinate. Therefore, the idea of trajectories of leadership is important to read because it helps to explain the historical evolution of leadership theories. By discussing the evolution of leadership theory, the study can show the ways that various concepts have emerged and evolved. Specifically, this study demonstrates that the concept of resilient leadership was not discussed in the early history of leadership theories. This highlights the novelty of this study and contributes to the originality of the literature. In addition, by understanding the historical trajectory of leadership theories, the study explores the evolution of leadership theories in the section that follows.

2.2.1.1 Eras of Leadership Theories

Understanding the evolution of leadership theories, particularly through the 20th century, is essential as it provides a historical context, highlights shifts in leadership thought, and aids in grasping the nuances of leadership practices over time. This section covers the journey from the earliest leadership theories, the personality era, to contemporary theories.

The first era of leadership theories was the personality era, which was further divided into the great man period and the trait period. This era marked the inception of systematic leadership thought and methods (Van & Field, 1990). The great man period, as the name suggests, concentrated on the study of remarkable people who had innate leadership qualities. Great men were regarded as heroes because they had the fortitude and tenacity to take charge and change things (Borgatta et al., 1963). Their tenacity in the face of adversity was proven by their ability to manoeuvre through challenging and unpredictable situations, armed with natural abilities that made them stand out from the crowd (Johns & Moser, 1989). The great man theory subsequently gave rise to trait theories, and the trait period moved to identify traits that would enhance leadership potential and performance (Van Seters & Field, 1988). During this time, a variety of personality traits such as intellect, confidence, charisma, and communication skills that were frequently linked to successful leaders were examined (Northouse, 2021). Although the personality era's leadership theories did not specifically address the topic of resilience, there aspects became linked to resilient leadership. In the context of resilient leadership, adapting, recovering, surmounting challenges, maintaining confidence and perseverance, and upholding effective communication during difficult times are essential (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005; Vella & Pai, 2019).

The second era of leadership, known as the influence era, emerged in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The influence era was divided into two periods: the power relations period and the persuasion period (Simon, 2022). The former period emphasised the effectiveness of a leader through their source of authority and the amount of power they wielded (French, 1956; Pfeffer, 1981). The latter emphasised the leader–member pairing (Hunt & Fedynich, 2019). This type of perspective emerged in response to the shortcomings perceived in power relations. During this time, it was realised that only depending on authority and power would not necessarily result in good leadership. Instead, in order to influence people, leaders need to be convincing (Van Seters & Field, 1990). Even though resilience was not a topic of formal discussion during the influence era, some aspects of this era are linked to resilient leadership. In the persuasion period, resilient leadership is evident in handling resistance and navigating conflicts. Persuasive leaders who could effectively communicate and negotiate with followers demonstrated resilience in their approach. They could adapt their communication

strategies and respond to resistance, setbacks, and opposing viewpoints in a constructive manner, finding common ground and maintaining relationships.

The behavioural era lasted from the 1940s to the 1970s and highlighted leadership as a subset of human behaviours. It emphasised behavioural traits and provided empirical studies on leaders' behaviours (Fleishman & Harris, 1962). Major developments include the managerial grid model by Blake and Mouton (1964) and McGregor's Theory X and Y (1966) which suggested that people are inherently motivated given the right workplace conditions. In this era, leaders were seen as reinforcement leaders who had the ability to shape subordinates' attitudes through reinforcement techniques (Ashour & Johns, 1983; Sims, 1977).

Theory X and Theory Y are instrumental in deepening our understanding of leadership styles and their role in fostering resilience. Sager (2008) investigates how these theories intersect with communication approaches, highlighting that leadership in Theory Y, which assumes intrinsic employee motivation, fosters open and trustful communication. This environment is conducive to creativity and adaptable problem-solving, which are essential elements of resilient leadership. In contrast, leadership in Theory X, positing employee apathy needing firm oversight, often leads to authoritarian leadership (Sager, 2008). Given that the initial focus of these theories was primarily on motivational assumptions rather than resilience in leadership, this aspect may not have received adequate attention during their early development stages. A thorough understanding of how leaders operating under these theoretical frameworks respond to stress and challenges can offer valuable insights into their respective impacts on resilient leadership. Leaders who embrace Theory Y principles are generally more successful in forming innovative, collaborative teams than Theory X leaders, who may encounter difficulties due to their more rigid approach.

The situational era (1940s–1960s) advanced leadership theory by considering factors beyond the leader and subordinate roles, such as task nature, positional power and social status (Bass, 1981; Hook, 1943; Stogdill, 1959). It comprised three periods: environment, social status and sociotechnical. The environment period suggested that effective leadership results from being in the right place and at the right time (Hook, 1943). The social status period examined individual expectations and role acceptance (Stogdill, 1959) whereas the sociotechnical

period integrated the two prior periods, recognising group influence and clearly defined leadership roles (Trist & Bamforth, 1951).

The primary objective of these situational leadership theories was to decipher the interplay between leaders and specific situational factors that guide their effectiveness. Researchers of this era realised that the unique requirements and circumstances of the scenario determine what constitutes effective leadership (Badshah, 2012). They sought to identify situational factors that shape the most suitable leadership style, such as the task's nature, followers' competencies, and organisational environment (Badshah, 2012). The situational era underscored the necessity for leaders to exhibit flexibility, adapting their approaches to meet the diverse requirements of very differ situations (Badshah, 2012). This focus on adapting leadership styles to suit different contexts hints at elements of resilient leadership during the situational era. In the present context, resilient leaders demonstrate adaptability and the ability to modify their leadership style in response to the specific demands of the situation. Foerster and Duchek (2017) further assert that resilient leaders recognise the ever-changing mechanisms within organisations and possess the capability to rapidly adapt to these complex and dynamic environments.

During the contingency theory era, spanning the 1950s to the 1980s, Fiedler (1967) developed contingency theory, which asserts that leaders ought to be placed in suitable situations and trained to adapt their leadership styles to situational circumstances (Khan & Nawaz, 2016; King, 1990). Concurrently, House's path–goal theory (1971) posited that leaders ought to adapt their style or behaviour to craft an environment that is conducive to their subordinates' success, emphasising that leaders guide and subordinates follow to achieve a goal (Hunt & Fedynich, 2019; Malakyan, 2014). Finally, normative theory stated that leaders use the most appropriate decision-making behaviours according to the situation and the need for a decision (Madachian et al., 2016; Vroom & Yetton, 1973; Vugt & Ronay, 2014).

The primary aim of the theories during the contingency theory era was to identify and understand the contingent relationships between various situational factors and leadership styles. Researchers of this era acknowledged the absence of a universally effective leadership

style, recognising that the best approach varies with each unique situation (Hunt & Fedynich, 2019; Johns & Moser, 1989). The focus was on identifying key situational factors such as task complexity, organisational culture, and follower characteristics and how they interact with different leadership philosophies to ascertain the most effective ones. The overarching objective was to ascertain how to best match a leader's style with the specific demands of each situation (Hunt & Fedynich, 2019; Johns & Moser, 1989). Nonetheless, in this era, several components of resilient leadership can be deduced from the focus on adapting leadership approaches to particular contextual aspects. Resilient leaders have flexibility and adaptability in their approach, modifying their style of leadership to fit the needs and demands of various circumstances, which is essential for preserving strength and optimism in adversity (Allison, 2012; O'Grady et al., 2021; Dartey-Baah, 2015).

The transactional era, which began in the mid-1970s and extends to modern leadership concepts, proposed leadership as a function of social interaction and differentiation, focusing particularly on the relationship between leaders and subordinates. This era was divided into the exchange and role development periods. The exchange period included the emergence of theories such as the vertical dyad linkage and the leader–member exchange, which were introduced by scholars such as Dansereau et al. (1975), Duchon et al. (1986), Dienesch and Liden (1986) and Graen et al. (1982). Meanwhile, Green's reciprocal influence theory (1975) characterised the modern era by emphasising the transactional nature of leadership interactions between leaders and their subordinates.

During this era, a key emphasis was on the exchange of resources like incentives, recognition, and awards between leaders and followers to achieve organisational objectives. Transactional leaders were primarily focused on maintaining order and achieving set targets through task-oriented strategies and conditional rewards, contingent upon their followers' performance (Boonzaier, 2008; Dugan & Komives, 2011). Although the concept of resilient leadership was not explicitly defined during the transactional era, its fundamental elements are implicitly evident in the leadership practices of that period. Dartey-Baah (2015) describes resilient leadership as performance and change-oriented, focusing on organisational goals and adapting to internal and external changes. The transactional focus on achieving organisational objectives through a flexible exchange of rewards and recognition

demonstrates an early form of resilience, particularly in how leaders navigate and respond to varying internal and external business conditions.

The transformational theory era, introduced by Downton in 1973 and refined by McGregor Burns in the 1980s, signalled a pivotal shift in leadership values, favouring intrinsic motivations over extrinsic ones (Madachian et al., 2016). Unlike the transactional era, this period highlighted the significance of proactive, inventive leaders who are open to new ideas (Bass, 1985; Hunt & Fedynich, 2019; Malakyan, 2014). These leaders inspire enthusiastic commitment among their subordinates through influence. Transformational leadership, which is instrumental for organisations during transitional periods, fosters the creation of a vision and cultivates commitment to change by identifying opportunities (Kozlow, 2014; Madachian et al., 2016). The transformational theory era exposed more resilient leadership attributes, revealing leaders as more proactive than reactive, more radical than conservative, and more innovative and creative while also being open to new ideas and inspiring and encouraging followers (Bass, 1985; Van & Field, 1990). This era's focus underlines the importance of adaptability and vision in guiding teams through change, setting a foundation for modern leadership practices that prioritise innovation, flexibility, and a deep connection with followers.

Servant leadership theory, first introduced by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970, began gaining significant attention among researchers at the turn of the century and has seen considerable growth in research over the last two decades (Dinh et al., 2014). Central to this philosophy, as described by Mayer et al. (2008), is the leader's primary goal to serve rather than to be served, with a greater emphasis on the needs of the follower. This approach shifts the focus from traditional performance-oriented metrics to prioritising the growth, well-being, and empowerment of employees within an organisation (Hoch et al., 2018). Servant leadership thus fosters followers' resilience and attends to their psychological needs and health, positively impacting subordinate resilience (Eliot, 2020). The foundational elements of servant leadership, such as integrity, altruism, humility, empathy, fairness, personal growth, justice, and empowerment (Yukl, 2010), align with the concept of resilient leadership. These attributes reframe the leadership focus to include sustainable practices, signifying a shift from

solely performance-based outcomes to a more holistic approach that encompasses resilience as a key aspect of leadership dynamics.

Authentic leadership, increasingly a focus of contemporary leadership research (Gardner et al., 2011), is closely related to servant leadership, emphasising authenticity. Authentic leaders, characterised by their genuine convictions and principles, are deeply committed to their organisations' mission and goals (Gardner et al., 2021; Appels, 2023). Their authenticity drives organisational focus and aligns with the principles of resilient leadership. Gaddy et al. (2017) highlight the positive impact of subordinate resilience on perceptions of authentic leadership. Leaders perceived as authentic foster a sense of safety and trust among team members, traits synonymous with resilient leadership. The work by Mao et al. (2022) indicates that authentic leadership positively influences resilience, facilitating it both at the employee and organisational levels when crises emerge. However, Stark (2020) notes that the effectiveness of authentic leadership in fostering resilience is contingent upon the leaders' coping strategies. Authentic leaders help create resilient organisations by establishing psychologically safe environments conducive to innovation (Maximo et al., 2019). Consequently, authentic leadership represents a paradigm shift from a purely performance-focused approach to one that integrates resilience as a key component of effective leadership dynamics.

The study traced the history of leadership theories, spanning from the personality era to the contemporary theory era. It demonstrated that, while these theories have provided substantial insights into leadership dynamics, none have explicitly addressed the concept of resilient leadership. In the 21st century, comprehending resilient leadership is more vital than ever, given the persistent and swift changes occurring in organisational environments, along with major events that have significantly changed the global political, social, and economic landscapes (Lombardi et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2023). Against such backdrops, leaders face ever-increasing pressure and high levels of stress when trying to deliver on their organisational objectives (Lombardi et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2023). The quality of resilient leadership required to navigate these uncertain and sometimes turbulent times may transcend those described by the various leadership schools of thought. Consequently, resilient leadership emerges as an imperative for leaders in the contemporary world aiming to lead

effectively and thrive amidst these challenging times (Giustiniano et al., 2020; Lombardi et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023).

2.2.2 Traits

Recent work by Yukl (2012) referred to traits as a variety of individual attributes, including personality, temperament, needs, motives and values. Holsinger & Carlton (2018, p. 103) defined traits as 'various attributes possessed by individuals—including personality, temperament, abilities, needs, motives, disposition and values—that produce consistent leadership performance regardless of the organisational situation)'. According to Chemers (2000), leadership is primarily defined in terms of the personal traits or qualities that are possessed by individuals that make them effective leaders. These traits are believed to guide individuals, teams or organisations in achieving goals and objectives. McCrae and Costa (2003, p. 25) 'defined traits as 'dimensions of individual differences in tendencies to show consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, and actions)'.

In the literature, leadership trait theories have a rich history that begins with Carlyle (1849), who described the first of many theories that have focused on the personality of leaders as a predictor of leadership and organisational success. Although the trait approach to leadership was not fully articulated with well-developed hypotheses, it laid the groundwork for most early research into leadership (Fleenor, 2006). This approach focused on the personal attributes of leaders, such as their personality and physical characteristics, competencies and values. The traits approach views leadership from individual leaders' perspectives and uses the assumption that traits produce patterns of behaviour that are similar across scenarios (Fleenor, 2006).

Early empirical studies on leadership traits occurred in 1904 in which school children were observed and the qualities that differentiated leaders from non-leaders were identified (Terman, 1904). At that time, traits such as verbal fluency, intelligence, low emotionality, daring, liveliness and goodness were identified. This led to the advancement of the idea that some personality qualities were inherent in leaders, which differentiated them from non-leaders (Zaccaro et al., 2008). However, across the years, researchers have established that only a few traits set leaders apart from followers and trait researchers assumed that there was

a set of characteristics that made a leader successful (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001). Further research has reported that the differences between followers and leaders vary widely between situations, showing that the initial research underestimated the impact of situational variables on the effectiveness of leadership (Fleenor, 2006).

Although the great man theories are being challenged by many researchers, leadership scholars have amassed support for the usefulness of personality in leadership research (DeRue et al., 2011; Judge et al., 2009; Zaccaro, 2007). Trait researchers tend to focus on a list of characteristics that relate to successful leadership. However, in more recent years, research has shifted from the study of singular personality traits to categorical approaches of similar traits (Fleenor, 2006). With this in mind, Fleenor (2006) identified traits such as self-confidence, intelligence, ambition, perseverance, emotional stability, creativity, motivation and assertiveness as the most typically included traits of effective leaders. In another study, Gardner (1989) identified leadership attributes which include physical vitality and stamina, eagerness to accept responsibility, intelligence and action-oriented judgment, task completeness, understanding the followers and their needs, capacity to motivate people, need for achievement, self-confidence, decisiveness, trustworthiness, assertiveness and adaptability or credibility.

Stogdill (1948) examined 124 traits studies that were conducted between 1904 and 1948 and found that the relevant leadership traits include self-confidence, alertness to others, intelligence, understanding of tasks, imitativeness, persistence and addressing problems. Most important in Stogdill's work was the discovery that each of the traits was dependent on the specific situation and none of the traits were needed to provide success in every situation. Stogdill (1974) conducted a study on 163 trait studies and found that there are no universal leadership traits; rather, it was found that organisational situations are key to the leadership traits that are needed in leaders. In subsequent studies, Lord et al. (1986) in their meta-analysis discovered that leaders differ from other people because traits such as integrity, confidence, cognitive ability, motivation, drive and task knowledge differentiate them. They claimed that these traits can be inborn or learned.

In the 1990s, there was a shift as researchers began exploring individuals' own thoughts, behaviours and feelings and those of others. The focus was on asocial intelligence attributes, which refer to a leader's ability to understand, navigate, and manage interpersonal relationships while effectively regulating their own behaviour and interpreting that of others. These concepts such as social awareness, self-monitoring and self-acumen (Northouse, 2021; Zaccaro et al., 2004). Northouse (2021) proposed intelligence, self-confidence, integrity, determination and sociability as the five major leadership traits.

Other studies on trait approaches to leadership have been conducted by Walter and Scheibe (2013). Once predominant in the 1900s, the trait approach to leadership has been disregarded. However, some recent studies have put the trait perspective back in leadership research (Derue et al., 2011; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2007). Others have examined the demographic trait of leadership and the chronological age of leaders, especially given the increasing longevity in developed countries (Burger et al., 2012). Walter and Scheibe (2013) used an emotion-based framework to provide a contemporary view of leadership trait. They contended that emotional abilities reflect the ability of individuals to deal with their own and others' emotions. Emotional abilities that were identified include emotion recognition and understanding and emotional regulation.

Leadership traits encompass individual qualities such as self-confidence, intelligence, ambition, perseverance, emotional stability and adaptability. These traits facilitate individuals, teams and organisations to attain their objectives. These traits' effectiveness is not fixed but varies according to context and the individual's emotional capabilities. Importantly, no universal set of traits guarantees successful leadership; instead, adaptability and aptitude for situational response emerge as critical components.

2.2.3 Behaviours

According to Stogdill (1946), Jenkins (1947) and O'Toole (2008), the trait leadership approach is flawed because it cannot determine the effectiveness of leadership. Thus, researchers have focused on the behavioural approach that includes the interaction between followers, leaders and the work environment. The behavioural approach identifies three types of behaviours: task, change and relationship behaviours, which explain how leadership styles

influence followers to achieve goals (Northouse, 2021). Several behavioural theories have been devised across the decades. These include the theory of Lewin et al. (1939), McGregor's theory (1966), Blake and Mouton's managerial grid (1964) and the Ohio University and University of Michigan models (Bass, 1990). Deshwal and Ali (2020) observed that behaviour theories are related to leaders' functions and their belief that effective behaviours can be learned.

Kim and Yukl (1995), McClelland and Boyatzis (1982), and Morse and Wagner (1978), have unanimously voiced that there are three broad categories of leadership behaviour models. First, the task behaviour model includes short-term planning. Another characteristic of task-oriented behaviour is performance objectives in which leaders guide and coordinate what to do and how to do it (Yukl, 2012). In addition, task-oriented behaviour includes monitoring performance and operations, which focuses attention on performance measurement and recognition (Komaki, 1986; Yukl et al., 2002).

The second category of leadership behaviour is the relational behaviours exhibited by leaders, which includes supporting, consulting, empowering and monitoring (Yukl et al., 2002). Supporting is a crucial aspect of leadership and encompasses consideration, supportive leadership and individualised consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1990; Behrendt et al., 2017; Stogdill et al., 1962). Supportive leadership behaviours help to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships (Bass, 1990; Yukl, 1990) and contribute to the development of skills and confidence among followers (Luthans & Lockwood, 1984). Recognising entails showing appreciation and is characterised by different leadership labels in literature (Behrendt et al., 2017). Various theories support different leadership behaviours, such as contingent reward behaviours and positive reward behaviours (Gray & Tallman, 1987; Szilagyi, 1980; Waldman et al., 1990). Consulting, as was emphasised by House and Mitchell (1974) and Vroom and Jago (1988), is an essential behaviour that enhances decision-making. Empowering, another significant leadership behaviour, fosters commitment and improves quality of decisions (Yukl & Fu, 1999). Monitoring, a meaningful leadership behaviour, directs attention to performance (Luthans & Lockwood, 1984; Mintzberg, 1973). By engaging in these behaviours, leaders can enhance their effectiveness in guiding their teams towards success.

The third major category of leadership behaviour is change behaviours. These include advocating and envisioning change, encouraging innovative thinking, facilitating collective learning, and external monitoring (Yukl, 2002). Advocating change involves communicating the potential outcomes of not exploring new opportunities or ignoring problems (Kotter, 1996; Yukl, 2012). External monitoring requires leaders to stay attuned to factors such as technological advancements, economic conditions and government policies (Yukl, 2002). Envisioning change entails articulating an inspiring vision for the future (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). Encouraging innovation involves fostering creativity and providing resources for developing new products and services (Keller, 2006). Facilitating collective learning involves supporting activities that promote knowledge discovery and improvement in work methods (Berson et al., 2006). These leadership behaviours contribute to driving positive change and innovation within an organisation.

In this section, the various theories of leadership behaviour were categorised into three main groups: task-related, change-related and relations-related leadership behaviours. These behaviours, reflecting the evolution of leadership theories, mirror the shifting styles utilised in organisations (Behrendt et al., 2017). Importantly, these behaviours are crucial for cultivating resilience in leaders. Foster and Duchek (2017) highlight the significance of rational behaviour, especially under pressure, enabling resilient leaders to assess risks and make informed decisions. This mindset enables leaders to retain composure and avoid impulsive choices that might compromise resilience. Resilient leaders embrace change behaviour, acknowledging the constant evolution characteristic of today's fast-paced business environment (Ayoko, 2021). They promote adaptability and perceive challenges as opportunities for growth. Task behaviour is also fundamental; resilient leaders are proactive and focused on accomplishing goals, thereby inspiring their teams to remain dedicated and driven, even amidst difficulties (Ayoko, 2021).

2.2.4 Experience

The literature has emphasised that experience is a critical component of leadership development and success (McCall, 2004). Deliberate practiceis an important aspect of the leadership learning process (Ericsson & Pool, 2016). Deliberate practice involves focusing

on specific skills, continuously practising it until mastery and then moving on to the next skill (Ericsson & Pool, 2016). Using this approach, leaders increase knowledge and contribute to their optimal performance. Reich et al. (2010) discussed the concept of resilience in the context of individual development and well-being. They argued that resilient leaders have often accumulated various experiences that enable them to handle stress and make progress, providing valuable insights for overcoming adversity and facing future challenges (eds. Reich et al., 2010).

To understand exceptional performance, it is essential to consider environmental factors that facilitate and promote such achievements. Performance is acquired through experience, which refers to exposure to situations and lessons learned over time, forming the foundation for performance improvement. The role of deliberate practice in improving performance is significant, and it is from this experience that expertise emerges when individuals consistently hone specific skills and knowledge, becoming an expert in that specific area (Ericsson & Smith, 1991). Galton (1979) and Ericsson (2006) underscored the crucial role of physiological exercises for improving performance, attainable through structured training and practice. In addition, they identified the interplay of environmental, genetic factors, and the capacity for rigorous work as influential contributors to performance enhancement (Galton, 1870; Ericsson, 2006). Skill acquisition can reach a plateau, but improvement can be achieved through additional effort and restructuring of skills to overcome these plateaus (Bryan & Harter, 1897, 1899). Deliberate practice remains the key to maximising time spent on and attaining expert performance (Ericsson & Tesch-Römer, 1993; Ericsson & Pool, 2016).

McCall (2004) highlighted experiences that involve adversity to provide quality learning opportunities for individuals. Experiences can come from exposure to various people, hardships and personal events. However, the benefits of these experiences can vary in accordance with prior knowledge, individual style and contextual factors. McCall (2004) cautioned that repeated experiences of the same type can lead to reduced learning across time. However, Ericsson et al. (2000) found that when leaders gain more experience, they become better at selecting appropriate actions consistently. Leaders can rely on constraints during the

presentation and recall of information, becoming more attuned to natural stimuli and representative activities in their domain (Vicente & Wang, 1998).

Building on this understanding of experience, it becomes clear that when leaders encounter various challenges and adversities, these moments serve as pivotal opportunities for developing resilience. The role of experiences in fostering resilient leadership is underscored by Howard and Irvin (2013), who highlight the importance of growth and learning through these experiences. King and Rothstein (2010) emphasise that the ability to surmount obstacles and adapt effectively in challenging situations is a defining characteristic of resilient leadership. Through diverse experiences, leaders acquire the necessary skills and mindset to approach difficult situations with resilience and tenacity (Howard & Irvin, 2013). These experiences expose leaders to various challenges, each presenting an opportunity to enhance problem-solving skills, learn from failures, and gain the expertise required for handling similar future challenges. Importantly, such experiences also foster increased self-awareness in leaders, enabling them to better understand their capabilities and limitations. This heightened self-awareness, coupled with lessons learned from past experiences, contributes significantly to building a leader's resilience, preparing them to navigate and lead effectively in an ever-changing environment (Howard & Irvin, 2013).

Furthermore, opportunities for learning from others' experiences play a crucial role in building resilient leaders, as highlighted by Campbell et al. (2008). Their research emphasises the importance of interactive learning experiences in fostering resilience in leadership. Leaders gain access to a wide array of viewpoints, problem-solving methods, interpersonal skills, and decision-making approaches through engaging with diverse people and cultures. Observing how others navigate adversity allows leaders to assimilate valuable lessons and expand their range of coping strategies and resources. This exposure broadens their perspectives and enhances their empathy and understanding. Such experiences are instrumental in developing a leader's resilience and adaptability to various situations (Campbell et al., 2008).

This section discussed the importance of experience in leadership development. It suggested that when leaders gain more experience, they become better at selecting appropriate actions

in difficult situations. Using experience, leaders can identify what they did well and what they could improve upon. Moreover, the diverse nature of these experiences contributes to both skill acquisition and performance enhancement, while simultaneously playing a fundamental role in cultivating resilience and adaptability. These qualities are essential for effective leadership, especially in demanding and dynamic environments.

Table 2.1 outlines the three foundational pillars of leadership: traits, behaviours, and experience. Traits include inherent or acquired individual qualities influenced by situational factors. Behaviours are divided into task, relationship, and change-oriented actions, guiding interactions between leaders, teams, and their context to achieve goals. Experience, honed through practice and diverse situations, especially adversities, empowers leaders to navigate challenges and drive organisational success.

Table 2.1: Summary of Traits, Behaviours and Experience

Element	Summary
Traits	Early studies focused on the inherent personality characteristics that differentiate leaders from non-leaders. However, later researchers recognised the importance of situational factors in distinguishing leaders. Traits refer to individual qualities, such as self-confidence, intelligence, ambition, perseverance, emotional stability and adaptability that have been identified as important for effective leadership. These traits may be inborn or learned and their effectiveness varies depending on the situation. No universal set of traits guarantees successful leadership. The understanding of leadership traits has evolved to include social intelligence attributes, demographic traits and emotional traits.
Behaviours	Leadership behaviours are categorised into task, relationship and change behaviours. These behaviours, which can be learned, influence the interaction between leaders, followers and the work environment and, consequently, the achievement of goals. Task-oriented behaviours focus on short-term planning, setting performance objectives and monitoring performance. Relationship behaviours emphasise developing interpersonal relationships, supportive leadership and empowering followers. Additional leadership behaviours include consulting and monitoring, which contribute to improved decision-making, enhanced commitment and better performance. Change-oriented behaviours involve advocating and envisioning change, encouraging innovation, facilitating learning and conducting external monitoring. These behaviours promote positive change and innovation within organisations.
Experience	Experience, especially when acquired through deliberate practise and exposure to various situations, plays a critical role in leadership development and success. Deliberate practice involves focused skill development, continuous improvement and resilience in the face of challenges. Experience can come from exposure to various people, hardships and personal events. Experiences, especially those involving adversity, provide valuable learning opportunities. Repeated experiences of the same type may enhance learning. Having increased

experience, leaders become better at selecting appropriate actions and develop expertise in their domain.

2.2.5 Psychological Capital

In this section, psychological capital (PsyCap) is discussed within the broader leadership section to emphasise its important role in shaping and enhancing resilient leadership. While PsyCap is not a conventional leadership theory, its significance in understanding and developing resilient leadership is paramount. It provides crucial insights into how individual psychological attributes contribute to effective leadership, particularly in the context of resilience. This perspective is critical to understanding the broader dynamics of leadership and its impact, thereby establishing a foundational basis for the discussion in the resilient leadership section that follows.

Scholars have previously emphasised the importance of human capital and social capital for organisational success (Adler & Kwon, 2002; O'Leary et al., 2002). However, recent developments in academia have shed light on the significance of psychological capabilities or capital (PsyCap) in leadership effectiveness and enhancing organisational performance (Haque et al., 2020; Peterson et al., 2008). In today's unpredictable world, organisations face unexpected events that result in substantial financial and human losses. Consequently, enhancing PsyCap is highlighted as a means to foster resilience among leaders (Singh et al., 2023), enabling them to better navigate and overcome challenges successfully.

According to Luthans and Youssef (2007), PsyCap refers to positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological abilities that can be assessed, nurtured, and directed for enhancing performance in the workplace. Recent studies have suggested that organisations can gain a competitive advantage by focusing on human resource strategies that are unique, valuable, difficult to imitate and non-substitutable (Luthans et al., 2007). Organisations need to develop PsyCap in a more innovative way, managing talent and providing training to cultivate better leaders and workers who think creatively, possess positive PsyCap and have a sense of purpose to achieve their goals (Cavus & Gokcen, 2015; Toor et al., 2010). Consequently, academics have emphasised the development of PsyCap among leaders to enhance their resilience to adapt, overcome obstacles and drive positive outcomes (Adil & Kamal, 2020; Singh et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2017).

Şeşen et al. (2019) conducted a study to examine the role of PsyCap in the effectiveness of leadership. The outcome using survey data showed that PsyCap has a significant impact on the effectiveness of leadership. Markarnez et al. (2021) examined the role of PsyCap and leadership as cognitive resources for the wellbeing of humans. They demonstrated that PsyCap plays a significant role in bridging the effectiveness of leadership and the protection of human beings. Suggested here is the critical role of PsyCap in leadership. D'Souza et al. (2021) found that PsyCap, knowledge-sharing and trust are important factors for leadership effectiveness in educational institutions, in such a way that excellence is promoted by enabling PsyCap to focus on employees and leaders. Li et al. (2019), Luthans et al. (2006) and Luthans et al. (2007) argued that PsyCap is vital for better workplace performance in which employee creativity is the key to organisational effectiveness, survival, competition and innovation, which requires leadership styles that motivate workers and enhance their PsyCap.

Luthans et al. (2007) emphasised the importance of PsyCap by portraying states and traits on a continuum that includes positive constructs, such as gratitude, forgiveness, courage and wellbeing. PsyCap is defined as a positive mental state that manifests itself in the development and growth of individuals and where hope, optimism, confidence and resilience (see Figure 2.1) are critical aspects that harness the potential of employee creativity (Luthans et al., 2007). Numerous studies have emphasised the integration of PsyCap into leadership, such as Li et al. (2019), Luthans and Avolio (2007), Toor and Ofori (2010), Loghman et al. (2023), Arnold and Rigotti (2021) and Ciftci and Erkanli (2020). In line with this discussion, the current study argues that considering the role of PsyCap in resilient leadership is significant. The above-noted themes of hope, optimism, confidence and resilience are critical for leaders, especially in challenging times and successfully navigating through crises. Scholars like Rego et al. (2016), Kotzé (2018), Singh et al. (2023), Toor and Ofori (2008) and Norman et al. (2005) have integrated it into leadership because it enhances the effectiveness of leaders.
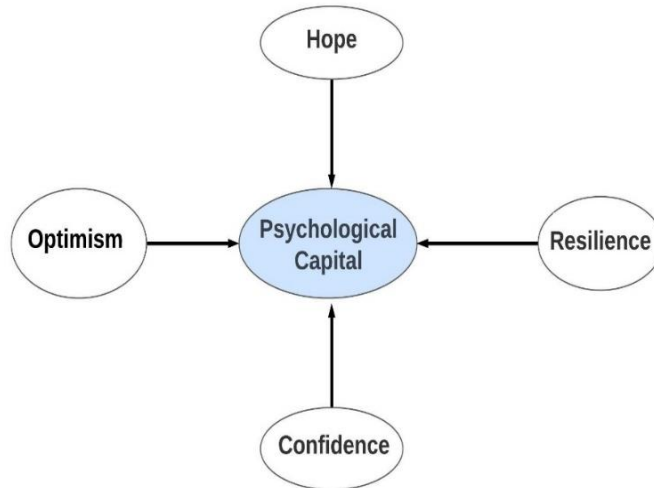
Figure 2.1: Four Elements of Psychological Capital (Author's conceptualisation based on Luthans et al., 2007)

2.2.5.1 Hope

Luthans et al. (2005) defined hope as a quality that enables individuals to persist in their pursuit of goals and the ability to change their approach when necessary. Leadership requires individuals to have a vision for the future and to set goals that align with that vision. Hope can play a critical role in this process because it allows leaders to maintain a positive attitude and a sense of optimism even in the face of challenges and setbacks (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005). Moreover, hope generates positive expectations and energy that promote engagement in pursuit of higher-level goals (Bissessar, 2014; Toor & Ofori, 2018).

2.2.5.2 Optimism

Optimism is the positive expectation that individuals have about their ability to succeed now and in the future (Luthans et al., 2007). Optimism is associated with increased self-efficacy, or the belief in one's own ability to achieve goals and overcome obstacles, which can lead to greater motivation and performance (Bissessar, 2014). In leadership, optimism can be a powerful tool for inspiring and motivating teams to achieve their goals (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Optimistic leaders maintain a positive outlook, communicate a sense of confidence to

others and foster a culture of resilience and perseverance among their followers (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005).

2.2.5.3 Confidence

Self-confidence is a key component of PsyCap that can significantly affect an individual's ability to execute tasks and achieve goals. According to Luthans et al. (2006), self-confidence is associated with an individual's faith in their ability to successfully complete a task. This belief is shaped by an individual's previous experiences, their environment and their thought patterns, which, ultimately, influence their perception of their own abilities. High levels of self-confidence can mobilise the cognitive resources, motivations and actions that are necessary to execute a specific task, which is critical in determining workplace performance (Goertzen & Whitaker, 2015). Furthermore, studies have shown that high levels of hormones that are associated with confidence and risk-taking behaviour can influence leaders' performance (Swar et al., 2015). Confidence, as a component of self-belief, is closely associated with efficacy, which pertains to an individual's conviction in their ability to accomplish specific goals. Therefore, self-confidence plays a crucial role in the development of self-efficacy, influencing individuals' motivation, behaviour, and ability to effectively achieve their goals (Bandura, 1997; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

Through individual enculturation and heuristic experiences about their efficacy, which are stored in the long-term memory, individuals' behaviours, thoughts, experiences and environment influence how they view their abilities (Frederickson, 2001). Such perceptions about oneself are critical in determining one's abilities and belief in oneself about the ability to successfully complete tasks (Gooty et al., 2009). Overall, self-efficacy relies on the ability to predict behaviour, which results in specific behaviour and behavioural change and the motivation and desire to achieve set goals effectively and consistently (Bissessar, 2014).

2.2.5.4 Resilience

Resilience, a crucial aspect of PsyCap, serves as a positive resource that aids individuals in navigating stressful workplaces, overcoming unexpected events and achieving success (Luthans et al., 2007). According to Peterson et al. (2008), resilient individuals bounce back

from adversity and demonstrate improved performance on their past. Resilience is an important trait for leaders because it allows them to persevere in the face of challenges and to inspire their followers to do the same (Patterson et al., 2009). Numerous studies have been conducted on the concept of PsyCap in the context of educators and teachers (Bissessar, 2014; Goertzen & Whitaker, 2015). Findings suggest that leadership training greatly influences the development of self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience (Goertzen & Whitaker, 2015; Wasden, 2014). Despite facing various challenges, such as financial and infrastructure issues, teachers in a work environment demonstrate a willingness to connect with hope, optimism, self-efficacy, resilience and self-esteem, highlighting the importance of strong PsyCap even amid global teacher burnout (Bissessar, 2014).

Resilience enhances positive abilities and reduces fear-related factors within individuals and their environment. Resilient leaders are better equipped to deal with crises and difficult circumstances (Bak et al., 2022). Resiliency is a PsyCap that is linked to leadership in several ways (Toor & Ofori, 2008). Resilient leaders are able to bounce back from setbacks and challenges and maintain a positive outlook even in difficult times. This makes them more effective at dealing with the challenges of leadership and it helps them to inspire and motivate their followers (Pitichat et al., 2018). As well, resilient leaders can build stronger relationships with their followers. They create a sense of trust and security and are able to provide support and guidance when needed (Singh et al., 2023). This makes them more effective in leading their teams to success.

Walumbwa et al.'s (2010) study investigated the relationships between leader and subordinate PsyCap, service climate and work performance using hierarchical linear modelling. It shows direct relationships and the relationship that is facilitated through subordinate PsyCap. PsyCap is crucial because it introduces the constructs that leaders and followers should possess to be creative, innovative and high performers during times of rapid change and crisis. This subtopic is relevant to the study because it helps to explain how aspects of PsyCap combine to give leaders and followers job satisfaction and promote job performance through innovation and creativity. Further, it introduces resiliency as one aspect of PsyCap.

2.3 Resilient Leadership

The term 'resilience' has a long history of use in fields outside of psychology, such as physical science and natural ecology. Editors Hollnagel et al. (2006) used resilience to describe materials and substances that had an elastic nature. Similarly, Holling (1973) used the term in reference to natural ecosystems and the ways in which they recover after natural disasters. In psychology, resilience has been studied in regard to children and their ability to cope with adversity (Garmezy, 1991; Werner & Smith, 1992). This understanding of resilience has been expanded and applied to other contexts, including leadership and organisational behaviour.

The term 'resilience' derives from the Latin word '*resiliens*', which means the pliant quality of a substance (Ledesma, 2014). Block (1961) initially defined the concept of resilience as a rare personality trait that was related to coping and adaptability but since then, the definition has evolved. Garmezy's (1971) study on schizophrenic mothers and their children helped to broaden the concept of resilience. Masten et al. (1990) found that despite persistent disadvantages, most children demonstrate resilience by bouncing back from childhood challenges and leading healthy and productive lives. Rutter (1987) defined resilience as the ability of individuals to respond positively to stress and adversity.

Luthans et al. (2006) cited studies by Luthar et al. (2000), Masten et al. (1990) and Werner and Smith (1982) as being instrumental in identifying contextual and psychological traits, such as social support, cognitive skills and psychological resources, as key factors that influence the capacity for resilience. Furthermore, Richardson (2002) identified three forces for identifying resilience: identifying the qualities of resilience and the support system that predicts people's personal and social success; engaging in the process of coping with stressors, adversity, change, or opportunity in such a way that resilient qualities or protective factors are identified, fortified, and enriched; and identifying forces that motivate individuals and groups and then fostering experiences to promote the activation and use. Resilience can be developed and enhanced through interventions, such as mindfulness, positive psychology and cognitive behavioural therapy (Southwick et al., 2014; Werner, 2012). The ability to foster resilience is a critical skill for leaders because it enables them to navigate through

adversity, uncertainty and change while keeping their teams motivated and engaged (Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Positive psychology views resilience as optimistic thinking amid adversity whereas resilience is seen as the capacity to overcome challenges and eventually attain success (Luthans et al., 2006; Masten & Reed, 2002). In the PsyCap context, resilience involves the proactive assessment of personal assets and risks that influence employee outcomes. Risks refer to predictors of negative outcomes, such as missed deadlines or harassment, whereas personal assets predict positive outcomes, such as promotions or mentorship programmes (Luthans et al., 2006). Risks and assets are integral to human and social capital enhancement, which can improve employees' access to skills, knowledge and abilities (Luthans et al., 2006).

Another vital aspect of resilience in PsyCap is performance boundary. Performance boundary refers to the point at which resilience represents a return to normalcy after experiencing an adverse event (Masten, 2001). Resilient individuals can return to normality after undergoing a traumatic event and even improve their performance boundary, depending on the severity of the adversity that they faced (Luthans et al., 2006). Resilient individuals possess several positive traits, such as resourcefulness, energy, curiosity and openness to new experiences, which they transmit to others, leading to the development of positive, supportive social networks in the organisation (Zehir & Narcikara, 2016). This aids the coping process and enables individuals to fulfil their personal and social responsibilities while being open to new tasks, ideas and experiences.

Patterson et al. (2009, p. 3) defined resilient leaders as those who 'consistently demonstrate the ability to recover, learn from and develop maturity when confronted by crisis or chronic adversity'. Lombardi et al. (2021) defined resilient leadership as the capacity of leaders to bounce back from adversity by influencing their followers and shaping their behaviour towards achieving certain goals. Dartey-Baah (2015, p. 101) defined resilient leadership as 'one that is both performance-oriented and change-oriented, and thus, pays attention to the meeting of organisational goals and also focused on initiating and managing change within the organisation to suit the demands of both the internal and external business environment'.

Giustiniano et al. (2020) defined resilient leadership as a leaders' ability to cope with adversity and emerge as a result of a complex holistic process.

In these challenging times, many organisations face unique stressors that require a renewed focus on resilient leadership (Patterson et al., 2009). Finn and Rock (1997) asserted that resilience involves successful adaptation to various tasks in life when faced with social disadvantages and highly adverse situations while maintaining a positive outlook under challenging environmental and interior conditions. Therefore, resilience is crucial in promoting optimism, adaptability and personal growth, which are fundamental in overcoming adversities and achieving success (Luthans et al., 2006; Masten & Reed, 2002).

Southwick et al. (2017) argued that organisations face many challenges, including a changing business environment. These challenges test the strength and flexibility of leaders and organisations. Resilient leaders exhibit psychological traits that help them to face and overcome fear, regulate emotions, stay optimistic and reframe adversity (Southwick & Charney, 2012; Southwick et al., 2017). According to Goodwin (2018) and Chance (2022), resilient leaders manage their stress in a constructive way, allowing them to thrive despite adversity. They do not let stress control them or prevent them from achieving their goals. They can clearly articulate their vision and inspire others to share their commitment. Further, they are able to listen to others and to build consensus. Ickovics and Park (1998) explained that the process of thriving is important in integrating diverse concepts of coping, self-efficacy and support that help to create adaptive responses to challenges. Hardiness is a key component of resilient leadership. It is the belief in one's ability to learn from positive and negative experiences in professional and personal life (Bonanno, 2004). Ledesma (2014) and Bartone (2017) asserted that hardiness helps leaders to buffer their exposure to extreme stress and to cope with it. Other variables of resilient leadership include coping ability, sense of coherence, use of personal resources, threat appraisal and self-efficacy (O'Leary, 1998). Overall, resilient leadership, as was defined by Foerster and Duchek (2017) and Junnaid et al. (2020), involves a leader's ability to effectively respond to and adapt to external and internal changes in organisations that are governed by dynamic and complex conditions to achieve the organisation's goals.

2.3.1 Frameworks

As discussed above based on resilience and resilient leadership literature, the concept of resilient leadership is in its nascent stages and its frameworks and models are still developing. Table 2.2 summarises five models for resilient leadership based on studies in the early 21st century. Scholars have conducted studies to establish frameworks for resilient leadership, concentrated more on other sectors, such as healthcare, in developed countries (Bonanno, 2004; Neimeyer et al., 2014; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004; Ungar, 2004). However, a significant gap exists in the understanding of resilient leadership within higher education, particularly in the context of Saudi higher education. It is crucial to acknowledge that higher education in Saudi Arabia differs significantly from that in Western countries, as it is deeply influenced by cultural and religious values. Thus, when exploring leadership approaches in this context, it becomes imperative to adopt a cultural lens (Nurunnabi, 2017; Elyas & Picard, 2013). This cultural perspective can help shed light on unique challenges and opportunities related to resilient leadership within the Saudi higher education system.

Table 2.2: Resilient Leadership Frameworks

Resilient Leadership Framework	Uniqueness of Model	Similarities Between Models
Constructionist model	The constructionist model focuses on the ways that leaders actively construct their own resilience. This means that leaders can learn and develop resilience skills and resources. The constructionist model is unique in that it emphasises the importance of individuals taking an active role in their own resilience. This means that leaders are not simply victims of their circumstances but can actively work to build their resilience and overcome challenges. Moreover, it highlights the power of reframing situations and finding opportunities for growth and learning. This model recognises the importance of individual and collective narratives and how they shape resilience in leaders. (Bonanno, 2004; Neimeyer et al., 2014; Werner & Smith, 2001;& Tugade, 2001; Fredrickson, 2004; Ungar, 2004)	All four models of resilient leadership have the following similarities: 1. They focus on the importance of individual factors in resilience. This includes things such as self-awareness, emotional regulation and problem-solving skills. 2. The models emphasise the importance of social support in resilience. This includes having strong relationships with family, friends and colleagues.
Thriving model	The thriving model of resilience focuses on the ways that individuals can move beyond simply coping with challenges to thriving in the face of adversity. The thriving model is unique in that it emphasises the importance of finding meaning and purpose in adversity. This means that leaders can use challenges as an opportunity to learn and grow rather than simply seeing them as obstacles to overcome. It goes beyond mere resilience and aims for personal growth, wellbeing and high performance. (Carver, 1998; Fredrickson, 2009; Garland et al., 2011; Nishikawa, 2006; O'Leary, 1998)	3. Moreover, they stress the importance of positive emotions in resilience. This includes things such as hope, optimism, confidence and gratitude. 4. The models underscore the importance of acting using

Resilient Leadership Framework	Uniqueness of Model	Similarities Between Models
Cognitive model	The cognitive model of resilience focuses on the ways that individuals' thoughts and beliefs can influence their resilience. The cognitive model is unique in that it emphasises the importance of changing individuals' thoughts and beliefs to increase their resilience. This means that leaders can learn to think more positively about themselves and their circumstances, which can make them more resilient in the face of challenges. It focuses on developing cognitive flexibility, problem-solving skills and adaptive thinking patterns. (Agnieszka et al., 2020; Bonanno, 2004; Parsons et al., 2016; Seligman, 2002)	resilience. This means taking steps to cope with challenges and stressors and to build resilience-promoting skills and resources.
Ledesma's model	Ledesma (2014) proposed a conceptual framework by reviewing previous research to develop a model for resilience in leadership. Ledesma identified essential protective elements that contribute to leadership resilience, including positive self-esteem, strong coping skills, and solid social resources. Moreover, Ledesma highlighted that resilience in leadership relates to factors such as optimism, self-efficacy, a sense of coherence, risk-taking, motivation and a high tolerance of uncertainty. These factors improve leaders' ability to build resilience, which is critical for organisational sustainability. (Ledesma, 2014).	
Relational activation of resilience model	The relational activation of resilience model focuses on the ways that relationships can promote resilience. It recognises that resilient leadership is not an individual endeavour but is influenced by interpersonal dynamics and the support that is received from others. The relational activation of resilience model is unique in that it emphasises the importance of relationships in promoting resilience. This means that leaders can build strong relationships with others, which can provide them with support and resources in times of need. (Lestari & Yusuf, 2018; Walsh, 2006)	

Studies in the early 2000s, including work by Ungar (2004), proposed the constructionist model of resilience, presenting it as a postmodern perspective. According to this model, resilience emerges from individuals' interactions with their environment and their use of resources to maintain wellbeing in adverse circumstances. This perspective aligns with the findings of Werner and Smith (2001), who identified that active problem-solving, reliance on faith or a positive worldview and an ability to foster positivity in others are key characteristics of resilience leaders. This constructivist lens facilitates an exploration of alternative narratives about resilience, deepening the understanding of the ways that at-risk populations build and sustain it (Ungar, 2001). Cirillo (2000) added to this understanding, suggesting that a defiant stance can correlate with improved mental outcomes and serve as a resource for preserving wellbeing. Extending this perspective, Ungar and Teram (2000) identified compensatory factors that individuals use to mitigate risk. These factors include self-esteem, competence, optimism, empathy, problem-solving skills, a clear sense of direction or mission and perseverance.

Recent resilience studies have introduced the concept of 'thriving', which stems from research on vulnerability and coping (Ledesma, 2014). Thriving entails an individual's positive transformation after adversity (Nishikawa, 2006). Moreover, scholars have produced new frameworks of resilient leadership called thriving grounded on positive transformation from experiences of adversity (Nishikawa, 2006). Thriving is characterised by the capability of leaders to transmute traumatic experiences and use them for personal growth, positive personality changes, wisdom and more meaningful and productive lives (Nishikawa, 2006). People can thrive by surviving an incident and enduring a hardship (Vera et al., 2020). Unlike recovery, thriving is characterised by a cognitive shift in response to a challenge in which leaders can refocus their priorities and develop a stronger sense of self (Nishikawa, 2006). Thriving is linked to constrictive self-determination theory, suggesting that the damage and growth after a traumatic event led to better thriving. The way that leaders respond to trauma is shaped by various factors, including age, self-experiences, interpersonal experiences, developmental stage and social, cultural and economic background (Ledesma, 2014; Nishikawa, 2006). The resilience capacity of leaders is determined by their personal values, efficacy and energy (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005).

Parsons et al. (2016) developed a preliminary cognitive model of resilience to help researchers study the ways that people think about and cope with adversity. The model focuses on the cognitive processes that are central to resilience, including executive control, information-processing biases and active cognition. The cognitive model of resilience suggests that people who are resilient can think about adversity in a more positive way. They can see the challenges that they face as opportunities for growth and learning. Further, they are able to find ways to cope with stress and to manage their emotions in a healthy way (Denckla et al., 2020). Moreover, the model suggests that resilience is enhanced by the ability to use active cognitions, such as positive reappraisal and problem-solving, to manage stress and to promote positive emotions (Sohail & Ahmad, 2021). According to Beck and Bredemeier (2016), cognitive models integrate information about current situations and assess whether responses are appropriate. They suggest that flexibility in cognitive systems can be adaptive or maladaptive, depending on the situation. Similarly, Wu et al. (2020) added that cognitive systems ultimately drive away from vulnerability and towards resilience by allocating contextually appropriate information-processing. The model is still being developed but it has the potential to provide a valuable framework for understanding and promoting resilience.

Teo et al. (2017) proposed the relational activation of resilience model, which states that leaders have social influences that can promote or hinder organisational resilience. The model highlights the importance of networked structures within an organisation and how they contribute to the development of relational networks, which, in turn, allow for the restoration and adaptation of organisational functions in times of crisis. Barton and Kahn (2019) underscored the significance of resilient leadership and crisis as catalysts for change, which involves a time-pressured shift away from normal practices to new goals. In addition, Boin et al. (2013) highlighted the paramount importance of the relational activation of resilience model for leaders during a crisis, including for sense-making, effective coordination, decision-making and instilling hope and confidence. The model recognises the role of resilient leadership in promoting organisational performance and underscores the significance of helpful communication, strengthening relational connections and demonstrating empathy and outreach (Teo et al., 2017).

2.3.2 Skills

Hamid and Ghazali (2022) studied the resilience models of educational leaders after the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. These researchers identified several skills of resilient leaders, including developing and maintaining a positive mindset and attitude, being risk takers who are mindful and stay in good health while intentionally regulating their wellbeing and leading with core values that focus on fearlessness, equality, excellence and resiliency. The study found that risk-taking in resilient leaders builds courage and enables leaders to use innovative thinking to solve problems. Patterson and Kelleher (2005) identified six key strengths of resilient leaders: accurately assessing past and current reality; being positive about future possibilities; remaining true to personal values; maintaining a strong sense of personal efficacy; investing personal energy wisely; and acting on the courage of personal convictions. Each of these six strengths reflects the actions of a great leader in any organisation.

Vazir and Meher (2010) highlighted the importance of resilient leadership, stating that followers who work for such leaders are less likely to experience negative emotions and behaviours. These resilient leaders cultivate a culture of resilience in their organisations, creating an environment that motivates followers to respond positively, strive towards set objectives and persist in the face of challenges and thereby improving people's efficacy (Hicks, 2020). In line with this, resilience, defined as the ability to withstand or recover from adversities (Vella & Pai, 2019), is a key trait that is seen in these leaders. They manage their emotions in tough times, consider various factors and maintain communication values, vision and organisational expectations (Vella & Pai, 2019). Hamid and Ghazali (2022) further noted that resilient leaders encourage shared responsibilities, boost resilience among team members, assume responsibility, foster innovative thinking and spearhead change initiatives. In addition, such leaders stay optimistic, motivate followers towards their goals and are dedicated to active listening and learning from others.

Lombardi et al. (2021) argued that leaders who experience trauma and stress are eager to settle when adversities emerge. Improvisation is an essential skill of resilient leadership when responding to unexpected situations and crises (Lombardi et al., 2021). Leaders who possess

resilience are better equipped to face adversities and to adapt effectively (Abrantes et al., 2018; Lombardi et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic tested leaders' capacity to be gritty, directive, empowered, flexible and responsive (Wilson, 2020). Özmusul (2017) found that resilient leaders who have visionary thinking can adapt to change and focus on the big picture. They remain positive and motivated even in an environment that has conflict and a lack of motivation. Resilient leadership involves balancing responses to contradictory focuses, such as rationality/empathy, stability/flexibility, present/future, local/global, autonomy/control and individual/collective, which require directing (Giustiniano et al., 2020). Resilient leaders should remain calm and maintain a positive attitude when facing obstacles or adversities (Giustiniano et al., 2020; Vera et al., 2020). They have a passion for their work, value it and are decisive, which cultivates in them a profound sense of belief in achieving their goals (Smith, & Lewis, 2011). Furthermore, they possess good decision-making skills and the capability to solve problems efficiently (Grotan et al., 2008).

Holmberg et al. (2016) found that resilient leaders possess self-efficacy skills, such as direction-setting, gaining commitment and overcoming obstacles. Moreover, they possess political skills, such as networking abilities, social astuteness and interpersonal influence. Their work engagement skills include dedication, vigour and absorption. Paglis (2010) argued that in contemporary organisations, leaders should possess generic capabilities to adapt to change and to influence others rather than specific skills. O'Grady et al. (2021) highlighted five skills that pertain to resilient leadership, including sense-receiving, sense-losing, sense-improvising, sense-remaking and sense-transmitting. These skills are important for leaders to effectively manage trauma within an organisation and to maintain resilience. O'Grady et al. (2021) suggested that sense-transmitting skills for resilient leadership entail agility, decisiveness, learning and foresighted organisations. Such skills enable leaders to actively engage with and shape their environment, use organisational characteristics and demonstrate managerial skills to create modular and coherent organisations. Resilient leaders who possess such skills can transmit the attitudes of wisdom and knowledge to their followers and stakeholders (O'Grady et al., 2021).

Resilient leadership requires self-awareness, empathy, ethical behaviour, mental toughness and a willingness to experiment and take risks (Grotan et al., 2008; Hacker & Washington,

2017; O'Brien & Hope, 2010; Özmusul, 2017; Shaw, 2012; Vera et al., 2020). Ethical resilience is integral to of resilient leadership, which empowers leaders to act ethically, creating ethical cultures that encourage followers (Grotan et al., 2007; Özmusul, 2017; Vera et al., 2020). Resilient leaders have the ability to stay calm and focused under pressure and to recover quickly from setbacks (Day & Sammons, 2016). They are open to change and able to manage risks (Grotan et al., 2008; Shaw, 2012). Resilient leaders turn off fears, foster innovative changes, learn from failures, accept situations that cannot be changed and find opportunities for growth (Southwick et al., 2017; Steward, 2014; Sturgeon & Zautra, 2013). Finally, resilient leaders are open to experimentation, risk-taking and capitalising on opportunities in pursuit of long-term objectives (Akash, 2020; O'Brien & Hope, 2010). In summary, resilient leaders embody a blend of characteristics, competencies and behaviours that empower them to overcome difficulties and to emerge stronger.

2.4 Vision

Vision, as described in this section, is an essential aspect of effective leadership and holds particular significance in Saudi Arabia's higher education sector as it strives to realise Vision 2030. Vision signifies a leader's ability to articulate a forward-looking strategy that aligns with organisational goals and motivates team members (Hunt, 1991). In the context of resilient leadership, the function of vision is pivotal. It offers a strategic roadmap that empowers leaders to anticipate challenges, adjust their strategies as necessary, and guide their teams towards successful outcomes regardless of the adversities (Özmusul, 2017; Southwick et al., 2017). Hence, the inclusion of vision in this literature review serves to enrich our understanding of resilient leadership, shedding light on its practical manifestation and contribution to organisational success.

Vision has been a topic of interest for researchers and practitioners in the field of leadership for many decades. As Kantabutra (2008) noted, there has been a shift towards leadership that articulates vision as opposed to a focus on leadership traits and behaviour. Despite its importance, vision remains a hypothetical construct that carries meaning beyond its mere description (Kriger, 1990; Stone, 1978). Nonetheless, a clear and compelling vision is essential for effective leadership because it coordinates team members towards a shared goal

(Hunt, 1991; Kotter, 1996; Sashkin, 1992). This section explores definitions of vision and highlights its significance for organisational success.

According to Kantabutra (2020), vision can be described as an organisation's pitch that effectively communicates the enduring values and purpose of the organisation. Hunt (1991) defined vision as a form of leadership, arguing that a visionary leader transforms organisational culture, brings others to accept it and mobilises others to support and implement the plans. Bennis and Nanus (1985) defined vision as a projected image in which leaders aim for desired outcomes. House and Shamir (1993) defined vision as a reflection of shared values to which an organisation should aspire. Strange and Mumford (2002) argued that vision is a cognitive construction model that helps to understand system operations and guides actions. These varied perspectives illustrate the diverse nature of vision and its importance in guiding leaders towards mutual goals. In their definitions, scholars have highlighted vision as an essential component of effective leadership.

Kouzes and Posner (1987) and Zaccaro and Banks (2004) argued that vision provides leaders with a clear sense of direction and purpose. It helps leaders to identify opportunities and challenges and to develop strategies for the attainment of goals (Avery, 2004). Another attribute that leaders should possess is 'resilience', which allows them to recover from failures and hardships. The link between vision and resilient leadership is observed in the literature. For example, Bishop et al. (2015) discovered that visionary leaders are comparatively more resilient because they can maintain a positive outlook and aim high even when times are tough. In addition, Shambaugh (2010) contended that vision gives leaders a sense of direction and purpose, which bind them to goals despite obstacles that arise. Avolio and Gardner (2005) commented that resilient leaders need vision. In such a way, visionary leaders can create a clear and compelling future, which helps them to overcome challenges and to emerge stronger. According to Avolio et al. (2004), Luthans and Avolio (2003) and Singh et al. (2023), having a clear vision is crucial for the growth of resilient leaders. They contended that resilient leaders can overcome challenges, provide effective leadership and reach their goals.

Visionary and resilient leaders execute a pivotal role in inspiring and motivating teams to collaboratively work towards a common objective by delineating a compelling and exciting direction for the organisation (Archibald & Munn-Venn, 2008). Arond-Thomas (2004) expanded on this idea, suggesting that a clear vision is a fundamental characteristic of resilient leaders because it ignites vibrant enthusiasm and provides proper direction for followers to work towards mutual goals. Moe (2012) argued that a leader who has resilience and vision is able to effectively lead an organisation through challenges and setbacks while keeping a team motivated and aligned towards a common goal and making strategic decisions that are in the best interests of the organisation. Shambaugh (2010) further attested to the power of vision, proclaiming it as a key secret to the success of resilient leaders: when followers understand and grasp this vision, it instigates engagement and propels them to achieve goals for the collective good. Given these robust arguments from prior studies, the current study posits that vision is a vital element for the success of resilient leaders.

From the above discussion, it is clear that resilient leadership is closely intertwined with vision. Leaders can articulate a compelling vision that inspires and motivates others while adapting and adjusting the vision as needed to navigate challenges. This forward-thinking approach allows resilient leaders to anticipate potential obstacles, identify opportunities and guide their teams towards successful outcomes. By aligning their actions and decisions with a shared vision, resilient leaders foster a sense of purpose and cohesion within their organisations, enabling them to overcome adversity and to thrive in dynamic environments.

2.5 Strategy

In the dynamic context of Saudi Arabia's higher education sector, strategy serves as a pivotal guide, steering leaders to their institutional objectives. Understanding the relationship between strategy and resilient leadership is vital to this study. It provides a foundation for examining how leaders make decisions, plan for the future, and adapt to environmental changes. Strategic resilience is defined as a leader's ability to anticipate and positively respond to threats to their institution's strategy, thereby preserving long-term objectives (Dewald & Bowen, 2010). This comprehension of strategy is particularly relevant to Saudi

Arabia, where higher education leaders are tasked with strategically steering their institutions through sweeping reforms to accomplish the aims of Saudi Vision 2030.

The concept of strategy has ancient origins. The Greek word '*strategos*', which refers to a general leading an army, was first used in Athens in 508 BC to describe the art of leadership that was employed by 10 generals on the war council (Gavetti & Rivkin, 2007). In Asia, the word emerged in 200 BC with Sun Tzu, who outlined various strategies for leaders to achieve their goals, setting the foundation for strategic planning (McNeilly, 2012).

In modern times, strategy has been defined in various ways. Porter (1996) defined strategy as the creation of fit among an organisation's activities, emphasising the importance of integrating various aspects to achieve success. Carroll (1982) viewed strategy as a statement of essential actions to improve performance by allocating limited resources and considering economic forces, external changes and competitors' roles. Oliver (2001) defined strategy as understanding an industry's structure, determining an organisation's position and acting to change the industry's structure or the organisation's position for improved results. Ramashala et al. (2015) described strategy as the design and direction of a journey, focusing on maintaining sustainability in the face of changing conditions.

In the 1950s, the concept of institutional strategy gained prominence, particularly through the work of Chandler (1962), who explored the relationship between strategy and organisational structure. Chandler's research revealed that the chosen strategy of a company influences changes in its structure. Ansoff et al.'s (2019) work is the foundation of strategic planning. They defined strategy as 'the pattern of decisions and actions that determines the scope and direction of an organisation's activities'. Ansoff et al.'s (2019) framework for strategic planning consists of four steps: mission statement, goals and objectives, strategy and implementation. Mintzberg (1987) challenged the traditional view of strategy as a deliberate plan. Mintzberg argued that strategies often emerge through adaptation and experimentation. He introduced the concept of the five Ps of strategy: position, perspective, plan, pattern and ploy. Mintzberg's view of strategy highlights the importance of flexibility and adaptability. He argues that organisations need to be able to change their strategies in response to changes in the environment.

Porter (1989) is another influential figure in the study of strategy. He took a more analytical approach and emphasised the importance of determining a company's position relative to its competitors. Porter identified four generic strategies: cost leadership, differentiation, cost focus and differentiation focus and they all provide frameworks for companies to achieve competitive advantage. Various scholars have revealed a common understanding of the importance of strategy in shaping the future of an organisation (Mckeown, 2019). Strategy takes a holistic approach by examining internal and external factors. It identifies opportunities for growth and potential threats that may hinder organisational progress. In addition, strategy involves a practical assessment of the available opportunities and matching them to an organisation's resources (Day et al., 2016).

In this section, the various definitions of strategy were identified. Strategy is closely related to strategic planning and the outcomes that an organisation or leader seeks to achieve. It shapes the future of an organisation by mapping out the plans and roles of the various parties within an organisation.

2.5.1 Strategic Leadership

 Strategic leadership is a complex and evolving construct that has been the subject of much research and theory. It is a broad linguistic construct that encompasses elusive and context-dependent meanings (Tipurić, 2022). Strategic leaders are responsible for setting an organisation's direction, aligning its resources and motivating its people to achieve its goals. They achieve this by integrating coordination efforts, establishing frameworks for mission fulfilment and future goals and emphasising the importance and relevance of strategic thinking, planning and behaviour (Boal & Hooijberg, 2000; Tipurić, 2022).

Strategic leadership is a complex and important position that plays a critical role in shaping an organisation's strategic direction and performance. Effective strategic leaders can develop a clear vision for an organisation, build trust and cooperation with stakeholders, develop the next generation of leaders and create a culture of ethics and integrity (Bass, 2007). Samimi et al. (2022, p. 3) defined strategic leadership as 'the functions performed by individuals at the top levels of an organisation (CEOs, TMT members, directors, general managers) that are intended to have strategic consequences for the organisation'.

Strategic leaders are individuals who possess a set of key organisational abilities and personal characteristics that enable them to effectively lead institutions. These abilities and characteristics include strategic abilities such as determining strategic intervention points, translating strategy into action, developing competencies, aligning people and organisations and having a strategic orientation (Davies & Davies, 2004). The personal characteristics of a strategic leader include being wise, adaptive, absorptive, able to link long-range visions to daily work and able to cultivate a forward-thinking culture (Adair, 2002; Beare, 2001; Davies & Davies, 2004; Dimitrios et al., 2013; Hambrick, 1990; Senge, 1990). Organisations rely on strategic leaders to navigate ill-defined situations, potential chaos and uncertainties and to translate strategic plans into actionable steps, guiding the workplace to its desired goals (Samimi et al., 2022). Effective strategic leaders can use their abilities and characteristics to develop a clear vision for an organisation, build trust and cooperation with stakeholders and develop the next generation of leaders (Finkelstein et al., 2009).

2.5.2 Strategy and Vision

As was explained in the prior section on vision, vision is a cognitive ability that allows individuals to see the future (Nanus, 1992). It is a key component of strategic leadership because it enables leaders to develop a clear and compelling picture of the future that they want their organisation to achieve (Madu, 2013). During periods of crisis, having a clearly defined vision plays a crucial role in guiding an organisation by addressing uncertainties and outlining its path forward. A shared vision offers a broader and enduring perspective, serving as a compass for accomplishing an organisation's goals and objectives (Altiok, 2011).

Strategic visionaries are catalysts for innovation and value creation because they reimagine established practices (Westley & Mintzberg, 1989). An effective organisational strategy has a clear vision, goal and mission (Mohamed et al., 2019). Strategic visionary leaders use available resources to drive exceptional organisational performance and to bring their vision to fruition (Rowe, 2001). An effective vision is moderately ambitious, visually compelling, focused, adaptable, achievable, enduring and easily communicated (Kotter, 1996). Visionary leaders shape an organisation's trajectory by envisioning a desirable future state (Rotemberg & Saloner, 2000). Through strategic and visionary leadership, organisations gain direction

and align their vision with their overall strategy (Quigley, 1999). Vision and strategy are interconnected because vision enables leaders to communicate their plans when implementing a strategy (Hunt, 1992). Further, it provides a framework and direction for change, addresses strategic variables and relies on effective communication by leaders for successful implementation (Rotemberg & Saloner, 2000).

Vision is a crucial aspect of leadership and forms the heart of strategy. Creating a vision engages people's imagination and energy, fostering loyalty and commitment (Nanus, 1992). Resilient leaders continuously support their mission through words and actions, visualising a positive future and effectively communicating a plan to inspire and to create strong loyalty (Gioia et al., 2012; Southwick & Charney, 2018). Fuller and Green (2010) asserted that effective leaders align human energies and vision with organisational values, enabling followers to grasp, understand and support vision. A strategic vision enables an organisation to make progress, provides stability and considers the future (Quigley, 1999). Leaders achieve their strategic vision by focusing on a single unifying idea that guides an organisation's decisions (Deloitte, 2020).

2.5.3 Strategy and Resilience

Strategic planning is vital in addressing weaknesses and threats and in identifying opportunities and strengths (Preble, 1997). Research scholars have attempted to establish a connection between strategies and resilience. For example, drawing upon the findings of Tugade and Fredrickson (2007), positive emotional strategies are demonstrated to play a pivotal role in fostering resilience. Their focus on emotional regulation, which involves managing the type, timing, and expression of emotions, carries significant implications. When these principles are incorporated into an organisational strategy, they can contribute to cultivating a resilience culture. Emotions can be regulated by maintaining positive experiences, extending positive emotions through conscious awareness and focusing on pleasant experiences. These strategies assist in emotional regulation and promote emotional wellbeing (Bryant, 2003). Further, resilience can be achieved using a positive attitude towards negative events, which reduces stress.

Strategies such as seeking positive appraisal, problem-solving, coping and infusing ordinary events with positive meaning contribute to this process (Karam, 2018). Psychological resilience describes resilience as the ability to recover from negative emotional experiences, adapt to stressful situations and changing demands and resourcefully adjust to evolving circumstances and environmental contingencies (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2007). In a related study, Sierra-García et al. (2022) found that during the COVID-19 pandemic, nurses relied on social and organisational support as significant strategies to maintain their resilience. Organisational support fosters positive work attitudes, job commitment and improved physical and mental health. Problem-focused strategies relate to resilience indicators, such as reduced stress and bouncing back from negative emotional experiences (Sierra-García et al., 2022).

Similar to vision, studies have acknowledged the essence of strategy for the success of resilient leadership. Shambaugh (2010) argued that resilient leaders who have a strategy sustain connections between people that ultimately turn into successful organisations. Stagman-Tyrer (2014) contended that the way that leaders react to difficult situations determines their level of resilience. The more resilient leaders are, the better they can cope with future challenges. Stagman-Tyrer further mentioned that resilient leaders create a strategy to tackle challenges. Therefore the current study assumes that strategy is an important component of resiliency in leadership.

2.6 Practice and Culture

Effective leaders recognise the importance of practices and culture in achieving organisational success. By understanding and shaping the underlying values, beliefs and norms of an organisation, leaders can create a culture that supports and reinforces the desired practices and behaviours (Warrick, 2017).

The term 'culture' emerged in the late 1800s. Tylor (1871) defined culture as a complex whole that includes the knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs and capabilities that are acquired by humans as members of society. In the nineteenth century, culture was often seen as synonymous with civilisation, representing a transition from 'savagery' to Western civilisation. In the twentieth century, sociologists began to challenge this view, arguing that

all cultures are equal and should be respected. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) defined culture as a system of shared meanings that are transmitted through symbols. This definition emphasises the importance of symbols in shaping culture and the way that people interact with each other. Since the 1950s, many definitions of culture have been proposed, each emphasising a different aspect of the concept. Culture is a complex and ever-evolving phenomenon and there is no single definition that can capture its full complexity.

The concept of culture is complex and has been defined in various ways by social scientists. The word 'culture' comes from the Latin word '*colore*' or '*colo*', meaning 'to tend to or cultivate'. Kroeber and Parsons (1958) defined culture as 'transmitted and created values, ideas and symbolic systems that shape human behaviour'. Chhokar et al. (2007) defined culture as the shared values, beliefs and practices of a group of people. Culture can manifest in two distinct ways: (1) individual-level culture, that is, the set of values, beliefs and schemas that individuals hold, such as thinking, feeling and acting, and (2) organisational-level culture, that is, the set of values, beliefs and practices that are shared by members of an organisation, such as organisational operations, policies and procedures (Smircich, 2017). Culture plays a significant role in shaping perceptions of effective leadership. Leaders who can understand and align their behaviour with the culture of their organisation are more likely to be successful. Moreover, leaders who are aware of the cultural context in which they are operating can be more effective. They can tailor their communication style, decision-making process and work practices to the cultural norms of their employees (Warrick, 2017). Resilient leaders understand that organisational culture is a powerful force that can shape employee behaviour. They shape organisational culture to align with and reinforce desired practices and behaviours (Suryaningtyas et al., 2019).

2.6.1 Characteristics

Hofstede (1980) identified six cultural dimensions that influence the ways that people think and behave: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, collectivism, masculinity and femininity. Individuals are deeply rooted in their culture, which inevitably shapes their perspectives on leadership (Hofstede, 1993). Prior to Hofstede's work, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) identified four dimensions of culture as follows: (1) individualism versus

collectivism, which refers to the extent to which people in a culture value independence and self-reliance (individualism) or group membership and interdependence (collectivism); (2) activity orientation, which refers to the extent to which people in a culture value action and achievement (doing) or contemplation and understanding (being); (3) relationship to nature, which refers to the extent to which people in a culture view nature as something to be subjugated (mastery) or dominated (harmony); and (4) time orientation, which refers to the extent to which people in a culture focus on the past, present or future.

Hofstede (2001) expanded on the dimensions of culture, including power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism and masculinity versus femininity. These dimensions explore the acceptance of power inequality, comfort with ambiguity, prioritisation of individual or group needs and emphasis on work goals, social roles and emotions. Other researchers, such as Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997), have explored cultural differences in leadership, examining dimensions such as universalism versus particularism, individualism versus communitarianism, neutral versus affective, specific versus diffuse, achievement versus ascription, attitude versus time and internal versus external control.

2.6.2 Models Incorporating Culture

Early social science studies of leadership overlooked the impact of culture, focusing instead on identifying universal traits or competencies that are shared by all leaders (Zaccaro, 2007). However, since the 1960s, there has been a shift towards contextualised approaches to leadership, which consider situational determinants, such as culture (Hanges et al., 2016). Hanges et al. (2016) emphasised that leadership is influenced by culture. They argued that leaders who are effective in one culture may not be effective in another culture because the values and norms of cultures can vary significantly.

Gardenswartz et al. (2003) proposed three models of culture: personal, national and organisational. Personal culture is shaped by an individual's familial, racial and educational background. National culture is derived from shared behaviours, values, beliefs and attitudes. Organisational culture is shaped by an organisation's guiding philosophy, expressed in its values, mission and vision statements. The studies by House et al. (2004) and Dorfman et al.

(2012) investigated 128 leadership dimensions, including autonomous, charismatic, humane-oriented, participative, team-oriented and self-protective attributes. Only a few universal attributes, such as trustworthiness, decisiveness and being informed, were identified.

Dorfman et al. (2012) discovered that leadership behaviours and attributes are culturally contingent in that their desirability is linked to culture. The relationship between culture and leadership is as follows: assertiveness is found in humane-oriented and team-oriented leadership behaviours. In societies that have a future orientation, desirable leadership behaviours include charisma, humane orientation, participation and teamwork (Veil, 2011). Gender egalitarian cultures value charismatic, humane-oriented, participative and team-oriented leadership behaviours (Dorfman et al., 2012). In-group collectivist cultures prefer leaders who exhibit charisma and a team-oriented approach. Performance-oriented societies desire leaders who demonstrate autonomous, charismatic, humane-oriented, participative and team-oriented behaviours whereas uncertainty avoidance cultures value humane-oriented, team-oriented and self-protective leadership behaviours (Dorfman et al., 2012).

Vroom and Jago (2007) introduced a cultural model of paternalistic and empowering leadership. The impact of paternalistic and empowering leadership varies across cultures (Kirkman et al., 2016). In collectivist cultures, empowering leadership has a stronger influence on organisational citizenship behaviours than paternalistic leadership (Ersoy Born et al., 2012). According to Raub and Robert (2013), empowering leadership is more effective in low power distance societies, where leaders are expected to work closely with followers, and less effective in high power distance societies, where power is expected to be concentrated with the leader.

Bhaduri (2019) investigated the relationship between organisational culture, leadership and crisis management. The study proposed a conceptual framework that used two cultural elements: internal versus external focus and low versus high levels of flexibility. The crisis management process was examined across five stages: signal detection, prevention, damage containment, recovery and learning. The leadership approaches that were considered are directive, transactional, cognitive and transformational, given their relevance in crisis management (Bhaduri, 2019). Sun (2008) noted that culture provides optimal ways of

thinking, feeling and reacting that can aid leaders in decision-making and in organising activities within an organisation.

Cultural values within organisations significantly affect crisis response, exacerbating or mitigating its effects (Bechler, 1995). Organisational culture plays a crucial role in shaping crisis reactions and outcomes, especially during times of adversity and change. Resilient leaders foster a culture of resilience, promoting positivity and proactive decision-making to overcome challenges. Effective leadership, coordinated teams and motivated employees are vital for crisis prevention and management. Bhaduri (2019) found that an internally focused, inflexible organisational culture combined with specific leadership styles and competencies can help to mitigate internal crises. During external crises, an externally focused, flexible culture along with transactional leadership, organisational creativity and issue selling aids in early detection and prevention (Veil, 2011). In the post-damage and recovery phase, a highly flexible, internally focused culture combined with transformational and transactional leadership, risk-taking, communication and decision-making supports containment and recovery. Overall, a flexible culture, along with cognitive and directive leadership, organisational resilience, learning and reflection competencies, facilitates recovery and learning in external and internal crises (Bhaduri, 2019; Wooten & James, 2008).

2.6.3 Structure and Processes That Lead into Modern Socio-Ecological Process

Petrosillo et al. (2015) emphasised the interconnectedness of socio-ecological systems, which encompass ecological, cultural, political, technological and economic factors. These systems evolve over time and space and in the contemporary world, they involve the interaction and interdependence of social and ecological systems (Binder et al., 2013; Ostrom, 2009). To facilitate these processes, it is crucial to establish structures and mechanisms that foster collaboration, communication and integration across sectors and disciplines. Petrosillo et al. (2015) argued that the reciprocal influence between humans and the climate, biota and ecological goods and services is growing stronger and gaining wider recognition. This recognition has led to an awareness that human interactions, behaviours and perceptions significantly shape the structure and functioning of ecosystems (eds. Gunderson & Holling, 2002; Ostrom, 2009).

In the context of modern socio-ecological systems, monitoring and evaluation are essential to assess the effectiveness of leadership actions and to identify areas for improvement. A holistic perspective is critical for understanding the ways that the various components of a system interact and contribute to the overall system (Folke et al., 2003). The complexity of a system arises from the interactions of various components. These interactions can cause new and unexpected properties, particularly when organisational thinking shifts from emphasising increased productive capacity to enhanced adaptive capacity (Petrosillo et al., 2015).

Social-ecological resilience refers to the ability of social-ecological systems to adapt or undergo a transformation in response to unexpected changes while ensuring human wellbeing (eds. Biggs et al., 2015). It involves the capacity to effectively navigate and respond to disruptions and disturbances in the interconnected social and ecological components of a system. The resilience of the biosphere occurs through experience and knowledge, using crises as opportunities, learning from change and facilitating innovative governance (Gunderson & Holling, 2002; Moore et al., 2012; Walker et al., 2002). The principles able to bring about resiliency include diversity, connectivity, learning, promoting complex adaptive systems, embracing polycentric governance and encouraging broad participation (Folke et al., 2016).

Human activities have played a dominant role in socio-ecological systems and the vulnerability framework helps to understand the links between exposure, sensitivity and resilience in terms of environmental and human changes and hazards (Berrouet et al., 2018; eds. Gunderson & Holling, 2002). Vulnerability is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by biophysical elements and socio-economic factors, which determine the sensitivity and potential harm (Petrosillo et al., 2015). Therefore, socio-ecological processes require taking into account the connections between human actions, environmental factors and the conditions and processes that operate within socio-ecological systems. These conditions can affect responses, such as coping, adjustments, adaptation and outcomes. Ecological change can be the result of three generic responses: (1) a lack of an effective response, which can lead to larger-scale crises; (2) responding without experience, which can lead to institutional learning; and (3) responding with experience, which can use leadership policies and approaches that have been tested in past crises (Petrosillo et al., 2015).

Section 2.6 explored the vital roles of practice and culture in leadership effectiveness, focusing on cultural models and the interplay between culture, structure and socio-ecological processes. Emphasising resilient leadership, the discussion illustrated the ways that adept leaders navigate complex, interconnected systems, adapt to unanticipated changes and capitalise on crises to foster growth and innovation. These resilient leaders, cognisant of the socio-cultural values within which they operate, tailor their practices accordingly to enhance their efficacy. A detailed discussion of Saudi Arabia's leadership and cultural context will be presented in Chapter Three.

2.7 Innovation and Resilience

Innovation, from the Latin word '*novus*', meaning new, has historically been associated with disruptive ideas, devices and methods. Innovation has been a part of human history for more than 70,000 years (Carr et al., 2016). In the sixteenth century, innovators who challenged traditional power structures were viewed negatively (Godin, 2008). However, in the nineteenth century, Gabriel Tarde emphasised the importance of innovative thinking for social change. Innovation was then seen as a catalyst for creating new opportunities and diminishing the influence of established elites (Kinnunen, 1996). In the twentieth century, innovation became associated with market-driven commodities and intellectual possessions. Innovation has been defined as the introduction of new ideas, processes, systems, products or goods and services (Carlile, 2004). Innovation in an organisation is challenging and it requires resilient leaders (Lane et al., 2013).

Innovation is a key driver of growth and prosperity and is essential for organisations to remain competitive in today's rapidly changing world (Matzenberger, 2013). Leadership plays a key role in fostering a culture of innovation by creating an environment in which employees feel safe to take risks and share their ideas (Lin & McDonough, 2011). Innovation, in turn, helps to strengthen an organisation's culture by creating a sense of excitement and progress. Cultural innovation leads to changes in behavioural patterns and fosters progressive improvement through continual refinement thereby increasing efficiency (Dean et al., 2014; Lloyd-Walker et al., 2014). Strong leaders create an environment that is conducive to innovation by fostering creativity, encouraging risk-taking and promoting collaboration

(Bhamra et al., 2011). Resilient leaders are particularly well suited to driving innovation because they can adapt to change and overcome challenges (Lane et al., 2013; Matzenberger, 2013).

Together, innovation and resilience are important qualities that can help organisations to navigate challenges and to achieve success (De Oliveira Teixeira & Werther, 2013). Cooke et al. (2000) found that variations in institutional quality, environmental factors and relationships among actors and economic capabilities can lead to localised and diverse levels of innovation. Regions that have weak institutions often face challenges, such as outdated technologies, a limited capacity for change and fragmented knowledge exchange, which can hinder their research and innovation systems (Weber & Rohracher, 2012; Tödtling & Trippl, 2005). High levels of innovation play a crucial role in supporting resilience. For example, Bristow and Healy (2018) examined the impact of innovation on economies' recovery from the 2008-9 global financial crisis. Their findings underscored the fact that innovative capacity was integral to resilience, enabling economic agents to cope with and adapt to shocks. This involves learning from past crises, adjusting quickly to changes, and efficiently exploring new markets and reallocating resources, thus being better prepared for future shocks (Bristow & Healy, 2018). In the context of resilience, innovation is an iterative and adaptive process that enables adaptability during short-term crises, recovery and shock preparedness. An innovative organisation can create new products, services and processes whereas a resilient organisation is able to adapt to change and overcome challenges (Arsawan et al., 2021). The two qualities are essential for organisations that want to succeed in today's rapidly changing world.

In higher education institutions, resilient leaders can foster innovation by creating an environment in which employees feel safe to take risks and to share their ideas (Abbas & Raja, 2015). This can lead to the development of new and innovative programs and services that can benefit students and the community. In addition, adopting a rapid innovation strategy can help educational organisations to gain an advantage over the competition and to meet the needs of their changing student population (Bhamra et al., 2011). Lane et al. (2013) revealed that higher education systems are exposed to risks and organisational innovation is essential. Further, they admired resilient leaders who overcome challenges of driving innovation and

motivate others to become involved. According to Makoe (2023), the global pandemic greatly affected all education systems and forced institutions to change to online learning, which was challenging because in many cases a structure and student support system to enable it simply did not exist. In this context, Makoe (2023) highlighted the crucial role of resilient leadership in adapting to change, overcoming challenges and building resilience in organisations. Thus, resilient leaders who can easily adapt to change and overcome obstacles, which are crucial characteristics for driving innovation, are of utmost significance. Further, they build a sense of urgency and passion for innovation, which can inspire others to participate (Makoe, 2023).

2.8 Summary

This chapter provided a comprehensive review of the leadership literature. It began by discussing various aspects of leadership, including theories, traits, behaviours and the role of experience in resilient leadership. The chapter then explored the concept of PsyCap. . Resilient leadership which was thoroughly examined by covering topics such as past studies' findings on and assumptions about resilience, definitions, frameworks and what the most important skills of resilient leaders are. The significance of vision and its alignment with resilient leadership was emphasised, followed by a discussion on leadership strategy. Moreover, the chapter explored the impact of practice and culture, including cultural characteristics, practices and models within the context of modern socio-ecological processes. Finally, the importance of innovation and resilience for resilient leadership was explored. The following chapter provides the study context by presenting an overview of Saudi Arabia, the Vision 2030 plan and its objectives, along with an overview of leadership in the country's higher education sector.

Chapter 3: Saudi Vision 2030 – The Context for Resilience Leadership and Higher Education

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I highlight Vision 2030 and introduce the notion that the role of resilient leadership may be aligned with its implementation in the Kingdom of Saudi Araba (KSA) for the higher education system. Given that the KSA is striving to achieve its ambitious goals for economic diversification and societal development, it is crucial to address the challenges that are faced by the education system and to implement necessary reforms in higher education. Traditional leadership approaches have shown limitations in effectively driving these reforms. Therefore, this study aimed to highlight the significance of resilient leadership in realising the objectives of Vision 2030, particularly in enhancing the quality of the higher education system. The study was conducted in public universities in Saudi Arabia and explores the presence and relevance of resilient leadership among leaders. By exploring the potential of resilient leadership, this study seeks to contribute to the prosperity and success of KSA as it strives to create a dynamic, diverse and sustainable economy. The study highlights that Vision 2030 of the advanced higher education system can be smoothly achieved using the placement of resilient leadership.

3.2 Saudi Vision 2030

> As Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al-Saud stated during the unveiling of the plan, 'Vision 2030 is the first step on our journey toward a better, brighter future for our country and our citizens. (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016, p. 7)

Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al-Saud, the deputy crown prince of Saudi Arabia, introduced Saudi Arabia's comprehensive plan, called Vision 2030, on 26 April 2016. Vision 2030 has three main themes: creating a vibrant society, fostering economic prosperity and building an ambitious nation (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016). Under this plan, the government aims to reduce the country's reliance on oil revenue by promoting private sector investment, focusing on long-term growth and expanding opportunities for Saudi Arabian citizens to realise their aspirations. Saudi Arabia has undertaken an unprecedented reform initiative to establish a

dynamic, diverse and sustainable economy. Education holds a central position in Vision 2030 as Saudi Arabia seeks to develop a highly skilled population to meet the demands of a knowledge-based labour market in the twenty-first century (Oxford Business Group, 2022). In a related study, it was given that Vision 2030 includes economic, social and educational goals to establish a stronger and more diversified knowledge-based economy (Naseem & Dhruva, 2017). It emphasised the importance of partnerships between the government and the private sector in key areas, such as industry, energy, technology, education and health (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016).

Recognising the paramount importance of educational reform and development for fostering a knowledge-based society, the Saudi Arabian government made education a top priority within Vision 2030 (Hamdan, 2016). Among the various sectors, higher education receives a significant allocation of the government's annual budget, reflecting its pivotal role in addressing the country's social and economic needs while respecting religious values and cultural traditions (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016). Higher education institutions play a crucial role in the comprehensive development of a nation and encompass aspects of society, economy and politics (Al-Taweel, 2020). Aligning the education system with market demands and ensuring that it facilitates the exploration and use of inherent economic opportunities is essential for driving sustainable growth (Al-Shahrani, 2022). As a part of the ambitious goals that are outlined in Vision 2030, the government aims to have at least five universities ranked among the top 200 institutions globally by 2030, reflecting its commitment to excellence in higher education (Saudi Vision 2030).

Consequently, leadership within Saudi Arabia's higher education institutions is under constant pressure to adapt and improve. Leadership plays a pivotal role in the overall functioning of educational institutions because it influences the quality of education, student achievements and institutional success and effectiveness (Hempsall, 2014). Therefore, Saudi Arabian universities require capable and effective leaders who can foster positive environments, promote change and facilitate development in alignment with Vision 2030 (Shafaim, 2018).

3.3 Saudi Arabia: A Brief Overview

Occupying about approximately 2,149,690 square kilometres, Saudi Arabia is the most expansive nation on the Arabian Peninsula. It is surrounded by Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait to the north, Oman and Yemen to the south and to the east, it shares borders with the Arabian Gulf, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. To its west lies the Red Sea (see Figure 3.1). Its strategic location between Asia, Africa and Europe has positioned Saudi Arabia and the entire peninsula as critical hubs in the evolution of civilisation, serving as key crossroads for merchants travelling from the east to the west and north (Al-Rushaid, 2010).

Figure 3.1: Map of Saudi Arabia (Saudi General Authority for Survey and Geospatial Information 2023)

The Kingdom of Saudi Araba was founded in 1932 under the governance of King Abdulaziz Abdulrahman Al Saud. Central Department of Statistics and Information (2014) reported that the population in 2014 reached approximately 30 million, of which Saudi nationals constituted about 66% and non-Saudi residents formed the remaining 34%. Riyadh was designated as the capital city under the political administration and the Kingdom was organised into 13 administrative provinces to promote effective governance. Mecca and Medina are two major cities, with each carrying unique importance within the nation. Medina revered as the City of the Prophet, and Mecca, acknowledged as the birthplace of Prophet Mohammad and Islam, is the holy city for Muslims and the destinations of the annual Hajj pilgrimage (Aldaweesh, 2018).

Alfalih (2014) states that the foundation of Saudi culture is deeply rooted in Islamic principles and traditions, emphasising the significant role that Islam plays in shaping the cultural landscape of the country. Established as an Islamic state under Sharia law, the KSA adopted Arabic as the official language and instituted a leadership structure (Ismail et al., 2016). Governance is characterised as a monarchy in which a king is chosen by members of the Al-Saud family. In addition to the king, two advisory councils operate: the Council of Ministers, which is tasked with managing and planning diverse affairs, such as the economy, defence, education and international relations, and the consultative council, which provides advice to the king on nationally significant issues (Ismail et al., 2016). Internationally, Saudi Arabia is active within numerous agencies and organisations, including the UN, the League of Arab States, the Islamic Conference and the Gulf Cooperation Council. Further, it engages with activities that are linked to specialised agencies of the UN, such as the World Bank, the Non-Aligned Movement Organisation, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries and the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (Ghaziani & Ghaziani, 2021).

The discovery of oil in the Arabian Peninsula and the transformative leadership of Saudi rulers are the principal drivers of the Kingdom's economic prosperity. The country's affluence is evidenced by its considerable 2022 budget of USD955 billion (Ministry of Finance, 2023), solidifying Saudi Arabia's position as the wealthiest nation in the Middle East. Parallel to this economic boom, Saudi Arabia has transformed from a desert kingdom into a modern state while steadfastly adhering to a key principle of its founding ruler: Islamic

law. Notably, Saudi Arabia possesses the world's largest oil reserves, which contribute 75% to the national budget (Alkharashi & Nickerson, 2012; Dekmejian, 1998). Thanks to prudent management, these resources have facilitated sustained and rapid growth in Saudi Arabia, bolstering its standing as a modern economy. Recently, the Saudi government has played a critical role in diversifying the economy to reduce dependence on its natural resources. This has involved direct investment in education and domestic industries, such as tourism. In collaboration with international investors, Saudi citizens are being incentivised to participate in economic activities within these sectors, further propelling economic growth (Al-Qahtani, 2011; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015).

The Ministry of Education (MoE) principally supervises the Saudi higher education system. It is important to mention that before 2015, the country had separate ministries for education and higher education. However, these two were recently consolidated to form a unified MoE (Ministry of Education, 2023). This ministry guides universities in line with the national vision while monitoring the advancement of education and the results that are produced by universities (Alabdulaziz, 2019; Alshathri, 2020). During the past decades, the KSA has substantially increased its investments in higher education. The number of public universities has grown remarkably from four to 27 within six decades (Ministry of Education, 2023). This growth has been propelled by factors such as the visionary leadership of King Abdullah and his successor, King Salman. King Abdullah's firm belief in education as a cornerstone of socio-economic development led to extensive government investment in higher education, causing a significant rise in university enrolments (Abouammoh et al., 2014). King Salman has perpetuated this commitment, spearheading initiatives to enhance the quality of education. In alignment with the Kingdom's ambitious Vision 2030 plan, targets have been set to increase higher education enrolments to five million and to enhance the quality of education outcomes (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016).

Educational policies in the Gulf Region often use Western theories of educational leadership; however, these theories may not be appropriate for the context (Sellami et al., 2022). This is because management and leadership practices are influenced by the socio-cultural, political and economic contexts of a particular society (Hammad & Hallinger, 2017). Alsuood and Youde (2018) conducted a study of eight public universities in Saudi Arabia to explore the

ways that university deans are attempting to harmonise contemporary influences and organisational cultural values. They found that societal and organisational cultures have a major influence on higher education leadership practices. The findings also revealed tensions between the need for change and long-held traditional values and customs. These tensions can stifle flexibility, innovation and autonomy for leaders in the country's higher education system (Alsuood & Youde, 2018). It has been revealed that leaders' decisions and practices are largely influenced by the political, cultural and social environment of the Saudi government (Algarni & Male, 2015).

The education system in Saudi Arabia has long been rooted in a traditional leadership style that is characterised by hierarchical, autocratic and reward-and-punishment methods (Algarni & Male, 2015; Almudarra, 2017). Saudi Arabia's high power distance index (Khan & Varshney, 2013) underscores a societal respect for hierarchical systems and positions of authority, as well as a reverence for older individuals (Alalshaikh, 2017). Despite the Saudi government's aspirations to enhance economic and educational outcomes and to keep pace with the global economy, the education system is hampered by its hierarchical structure. Almudarra (2017) found that the majority of educational leaders in Saudi Arabia adopt transactional leadership styles that are rooted in these traditions. These methods, marked by rewards and punishments, restrict leaders' ability to select their own goals and objectives. Over recent decades, significant investments have been made in higher education, indicating the government's commitment to change. However, Gonaim (2019) argued that effective leadership remains crucial to implementing these reforms. To cause the desired improvements in the education system, the Saudi government needs to encourage the adoption of resilient leadership. As was defined by Patterson et al. (2009) and Foerster and Duchek (2017), resilient leadership involves a leader's capacity to respond effectively and positively and adapt to external and internal changes in dynamic and complex organisational conditions while influencing and encouraging followers to strive towards achieving the organisation's goals.

3.3.1 Higher Education Leadership

In recent years, the education sector in Saudi Arabia has received the biggest proportion of government spending of any sector of the economy. In accordance with the goals of Vision 2030, the government has implemented several reform programs that are targeted at enhancing the quality of teaching and curricula as well as the levels of student achievement. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is committed to providing all students in Saudi Arabia with a quality education. The MoE uses data from international standardised tests and other indicators to track student performance and to make informed decisions about how to improve the education system (Oxford Business Group, 2022).

Saudi Arabia's higher education sector is currently undergoing significant reforms as a part of its Vision 2030 plan. However, the sector is grappling with identifying an effective leadership approach that is capable of fostering creativity, innovation and collaboration (Gonaim, 2019; Maulding et al., 2012; Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). In addition, Saudi Arabia's current higher education reforms aspire to elevate Saudi universities to world-class status. However, the specific strategies to accomplish this objective remain undefined. Managing higher education in line with these new reforms presents a significant challenge for leadership, which can only be successfully met through effective leadership (Hamdan, 2016).

Many Saudi universities continue to face challenges in identifying competent leaders, primarily due to the prevailing cultural norms and the belief that effective leaders should excel in research or teaching with extensive experience (Gonaim, 2019). Consequently, the process of selecting department heads in Saudi higher education institutions often gives priority to research proficiency and teaching experience, even when the candidates may lack the essential leadership skills (Gonaim, 2019). This practice raises concerns regarding the alignment between leadership capabilities and the selection process. Similarly, Al-Shahrani's (2022) study on the KSA's higher education system reveals that cultural, social, organisational, and personal factors significantly influence the promotion of individuals to leadership positions. Considering the current reforms of Vision 2030, there is a pressing need

for resilient leadership to effectively address the challenges that emerge during transitional periods.

Lebeau and Alruwaili (2022) investigated the leadership challenges of a public university in Saudi Arabia from the perspective of academic managers. The study found that the government's modernisation agenda is often in disagreement with local social and cultural orders, which can make it difficult to implement prescribed models of university governance and management. Further, it found that the Saudi higher education landscape is becoming increasingly diverse, which poses new challenges to the government's one-size-fits-all model of governance for public universities (Lebeau & Alruwaili, 2022). Wirba and Shmaila (2015) argued that aligning the various cultures in the Saudi education system is essential for leaders in the sector. They conducted a study to examine the leadership styles that are adopted by leaders in Saudi universities. The findings revealed that the majority of leaders adopt some of the characteristics of transformational leadership. Further, they indicate that middle-level leaders in higher education mostly rate themselves as transformational leaders but the results showed that they incorporate aspects of transactional leadership (Wirba & Shmaila, 2015). Given that the education sector in the country is currently undergoing massive changes, the possibility of creativity and innovation depends on a leader's clear goals and strategies, the ability to adapt to changes and the ability to deal with challenges that may arise during transitional periods (Teo et al., 2017).

The emerging leadership approaches in Saudi Arabian higher education are greatly influenced by the philosophical principles for goal attainment (Almudarra, 2017). This has led to the increasing adoption of an authoritative, hierarchical and curriculum-based system that is greatly influenced and governed by the country's social, political and cultural history (Algarni & Male, 2015; Alsuood & Youde, 2018; Hammad & Hallinger, 2017). The adoption of leadership styles, including authoritative, transactional, and transformational, is restricted by the demands of Saudi society, especially in a context where the system is highly centralised and leaders predominantly function as actors of government directives. However, rapid economic and social changes are significantly impacting the Saudi Arabian higher education sector and there is a growing demand for autonomy, creativity, flexibility and innovativeness in leadership (Almudarra, 2017; Alsuood & Youde, 2018).

Effective leadership in higher education is paramount to the success of students, faculty and the university as a whole (Miller et al., 2016). Leaders play a significant role in enhancing the quality of education, fostering a conducive work environment and ensuring institutional sustainability (Gonaim, 2019). Given the current challenges that are faced by higher education administrators, such as technological advancements, increasing enrolment demands, competition, accreditation issues and globalisation, resilient leadership is essential (Gonaim, 2019). This resilience is particularly vital for addressing the evolving social and cultural landscape and the growing needs for autonomy, creativity and innovation within the Saudi higher education system. Resilient leaders are characterised by their adaptability in the face of change and ability to tackle challenges, build robust teams and sustain a positive work environment (Giustiniano et al., 2020; Patterson et al., 2009; Teo et al., 2017). Such leadership is fundamental for steering the Saudi higher education system through the current challenges and towards future success.

3.3.2 Resilient Leadership and Saudi Government's Vision 2030

Leadership in higher education is critical for strengthening institutions and supporting student and faculty success. Leaders in higher education face numerous obstacles and have an increased number of duties. As a result, effective leadership is required to address today's difficulties and to ensure that higher education institutions prosper in the future.

In Saudi Arabia, the government has prioritised higher education and established goals under Vision 2030 to improve the quality and competitiveness of the higher education system. The government devotes a large percentage of its annual budget to higher education, recognising its importance in meeting the country's real, social and economic demands while upholding religious and cultural traditions. As a result, leaders in Saudi Arabian higher education institutions are constantly under pressure to adapt to change (Gonaim, 2019; Shafai, 2018). University leaders' leadership styles have a direct impact on educational quality, student achievement and overall institutional success and effectiveness (Hempsall, 2014). As a result, Saudi Arabian universities require qualified and effective leaders who are capable of cultivating good environments that are conducive to driving change and facilitating development in accordance with the Vision 2030 plan (Shafai, 2018). However, these leaders

frequently lack the requisite leadership abilities and behaviours to inspire creativity, innovation and cooperation, slowing the rate of change and the efficacy of their institutions (Gonaim, 2019; Shafai, 2018).

According to Ledesma (2014), resilient leadership is critical to building a strategic vision. The investigation revealed a direct link between leaders' resilience and their ability to overcome ongoing hurdles that are associated with delivering strategic goals. Ledesma further stated that good leaders use the urgency that is caused by stress to inspire and connect teams and individuals to achieve an organisation's goals. Similarly, Southwick et al. (2017) and Breen (2017) contended that resilient leaders thrive under stress, demonstrating an ability to withstand adversities. According to resilient leadership theory, resilient leaders have the ability to survive, recover and prosper in the face of adversity. Salas-Vallina et al. (2022) and Patterson, Goens and Reed (2009) mentioned that resilient leaders continue to advance even in difficult situations, guiding organisations to success by demonstrating an ability to recover, learn and respond with maturity to adversity and crises. To effectively overcome obstacles, resilient leaders attempt to gain a comprehensive and accurate picture of the situation, drawing on their personal values, efficacy, wellbeing and support networks. In this regard, Ledesma (2014) recommended that organisations and individuals should support the formation of resilient leaders by creating environments that quickly produce resilient leaders. These resilient leaders may then foster the resilience that is needed for personal and organisational productivity and sustainability.

In a similar vein, Quigley (1999) delved into the role of leadership in the development, sharing and sustainability of an organisation's vision. Through this exploration, Quigley highlighted that vision is a significant source of power, institutional values, goals and objectives and relies on visionary leadership. In a study that involved 870 CEOs from 20 countries, 98% of participants agreed that visionary leadership was a crucial attribute in the year 1993 and they believed that it would continue to be highly relevant by the year 2000. This underscores the enduring importance of visionary leadership (Quigley, 1999). In addition, Nguyen et al. (2016) asserted that optimism and proactive personality play vital roles as moderating factors in institutional resilience, a perspective that is increasingly acknowledged in the fields of psychology and leadership research. The authors conducted a

study that involved 269 white-collar workers in New Zealand to explore the relationship between dispositional variables, such as optimism, proactive personality, empowerment and leadership style. These attributes contribute to building employee resilience thereby enhancing an institution's ability to accomplish its goals and objectives (Nguyen et al., 2016). It is important to note that all the aforementioned studies were conducted in developed economies and, to the best of this author's knowledge, no published research to date has explored these specific issues within Saudi Arabia.

In a relevant study conducted in Saudi Arabia, Al-Omara et al. (2019) investigated the impact of organisational support and resilience on the level of engagement among pharmacists working in stressful and competitive workplaces. The results of their research demonstrated a significant correlation between organisational support, resilience and employee engagement, even in challenging environments. Furthermore, the study revealed that promoting employee engagement and resilience has positive effects on organisational productivity, motivation and retention. However, the researchers observed that leaders' failure to foster employee engagement resulted in high rates of turnover and diminished value creation and efficiency, which, ultimately, had detrimental effects on overall organisational performance. These findings once again highlight the crucial role of employee resilience and engagement for achieving long-term success (Al-Omara et al., 2019). Drawing from the insights that have been gained in non-academic organisations, the proposed study aimed to investigate the concept of resilient leadership within higher education institutions.

To gain a competitive advantage, universities in Saudi Arabia must expeditiously implement Saudi Vision 2030 (Allmnakrah & Evers, 2020). However, it is imperative for these institutions to ensure that the current systems remain intact during the transition to the future vision. The implementation of change is a complex process that is characterised by uncertainty, risk, stress, a lack of motivation and clarity and the need for a positive mindset (Gardner, 2020; Storm et al., 2019). Self-monitored leadership offers an effective approach to addressing the challenges that are associated with change. This form of leadership entails self-awareness and encompasses traits such as clarity, the fostering of sustainable relationships, teamwork, trust, stress resilience and a positive mindset (Beardslee, 1989; Eriksen, 2009; Flores, 2019). Resilient leaders often possess these qualities, making them

well suited to effectively implementing Saudi Vision 2030 within universities. Consequently, universities must plan strategically to simultaneously achieve short-term and long-term goals, including the implementation of Saudi Vision 2030. The introduction of Vision 2030 in higher education requires change and improved performance (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2018). Resilient leadership is a characteristically critical study because it cuts across all types of leadership styles and approaches and the characteristics focus on performance orientation and change orientation (Dartey-Baah, 2015). This study significantly contributes to the theory of resilient leadership and its role in implementing Saudi Vision 2030.

The successful integration of Vision 2030 within universities in Saudi Arabia necessitates substantial strategic realignment and transformation across various key areas. These areas for improvement include (1) leadership training and development, (2) creating a learning environment that fosters creativity and innovation, (3) adapting the curriculum and teaching methods, (4) developing student values, core skills and employability, (5) enhancing financial methods and financial efficiency and (6) ensuring students are able to meet labour market needs (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2018). This realignment necessitates a substantial transformation of current strategies and the integration of the existing vision with Vision 2030 for universities to succeed. When universities undergo this intense transformative phase, they undoubtedly require leaders who exhibit resilient characteristics. Consequently, it is crucial for universities in Saudi Arabia to prioritise the training of leaders who embody resilient leadership qualities to make the necessary strategic realignments to reflect Vision 2030.

According to ALSharari (2019), Saudi Vision 2030 aims to implement various initiatives, such as teacher training, professional development, curriculum development and innovative practices, for the goal of enhancing the quality of research in higher education. Although the vision itself is clear and robust, universities lack a comprehensive framework of strategies and action plans that are necessary to transform the vision into reality. The higher education system in Saudi Arabia holds immense potential and is fuelled by enthusiasm at all levels, from the government to individual academics (ALSharari, 2019; Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). However, the primary concern lies in integrating effective governance, leadership, teaching and learning, at the institutional and individual levels, to translate this enthusiasm

into tangible outcomes. Strong leadership mechanisms are required to foster innovation, creativity and collaboration within universities (ALSharari, 2019; Smith & Abouammoh, 2013).

The primary objective of Saudi Vision 2030 is to shift the country from an oil-based economy to a knowledge-based economy. In this transition, universities play a crucial role because they serve as a hub for knowledge creation and dissemination (Nurunnabi, 2017). However, universities face significant challenges in terms of functional and structural changes in higher education and the integration of cultural norms, traditions and expectations within a knowledge economy. Challenges encompass student enrolment, accreditation, research productivity, governance issues and quality education (Alharbi, 2016) as well as non-sustainable funding, globalisation and the ratio of international students (Nurunnabi, 2017). The higher education system in Saudi Arabia is relatively young, unlike those in other developed and developing countries, which further magnifies the challenges and uncertainties that it faces. In such circumstances, resilient leadership emerges as the most effective approach to addressing these ambiguous situations. Nurunnabi (2017) highlighted that Saudi Arabia's higher education is deeply rooted in cultural values and leadership should be examined through a cultural lens. Instead of applying Western leadership styles, resilient leadership is more suitable because it considers organisations' cultures and integrates their characteristics with the local culture.

3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a concise introduction to the Vision 2030 plan that is being implemented in the KSA. It began with an overview of the Vision 2030 plan and its objectives. The chapter then delved into the current state of the higher education system in Saudi Arabia, highlighting the challenges that leaders face. These challenges set the stage for the subsequent discussion on the reforms that are needed in higher education and the limitations of traditional leadership in effectively implementing these reforms. Finally, the chapter emphasised the importance of resilient leadership in realising the goals of Vision 2030, particularly for enhancing the quality of the higher education system and driving the prosperity of Saudi Arabia. The next chapter on research methodology provides a detailed

explanation of the methodological approach adopted in this study, along with the methods used for data collection.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe the research methodology and design that were adopted by this study. It provides the research procedure and clarifies the fundamental assumptions of the paradigm that form the basis of the study. The sections that follow contain an outline of the methodological approach, data collection methods and analytical procedures that generated the overall data findings. The purpose of this study is to explore the presence of resilient leadership among leaders in the Saudi higher education sector for achieving transformative strategic visions for the country, specifically Vision 2030. The concept of research methodology pertains to the overall guiding principles that dictate the research enquiries. The present study is guided by two specific research questions. The main question explores the presence and relevance of resilient leadership among leaders in the Saudi higher education sector to achieve Vision 2030. This primary question is further elucidated by a sub-question that delves into the traits, behaviours, and skills of resilient leadership and how they link to the achievement of Saudi Vision 2030. Together, these questions endeavour to provide a deeper understanding of resilient leadership's potential impact on realising Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. The study questions to be explored are:

Key Research Question
Is resilient leadership present and relevant in Saudi higher education leaders to achieve Vision 2030?
Sub-Question
How do the traits, behaviours and skills of resilient leadership link to the achievement of Saudi Vision 2030?

4.2 Research Paradigm

The assumptions that a researcher makes before and during the course of a study are critical for shaping the research questions and the methods that are used to interpret the findings. These assumptions and beliefs are the research philosophy that support the development of

knowledge (Saunders et al., 2009). A research paradigm is defined as 'the set of basic beliefs that deals with the ultimate nature of the world, the individual's place in it, the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). According to Jackson (2013), within the unique context of research, it is crucial that a researcher considers the conceptual background and epistemological and ontological perspectives to make informed decisions about the methodology that is adopted to answer the research questions. Strengthening the rationale for the methodology helps to justify the research process, defend the outcomes and use philosophical tools to aid in clarifying the inquiry process and to provide insights into the assumptions on which it rests conceptually (Kincheloe & Berry 2004 cited in Jackson, 2013). In this case, the various factors that contribute to the interpretation of a phenomena as knowledge are developed; however, if the explicit formulation of philosophical backgrounds lack for verifying and explaining knowledge of reality, researchers may remain unaware of the deeper meanings and commitments of how to conduct the research. Therefore, research paradigms are important for informing and guiding studies (Bryman 2012; Saunders et al., 2009). In this section, the philosophical position that underpins this study's paradigm and the rationale for the choice is provided.

4.2.1 Ontological

According to Bryman (2012), ontological and epistemological factors are major considerations in research paradigms. Ontology is concerned with the assumptions pertaining to the nature of reality (Saunders et al., 2009). Ontological assumptions shape how a researcher sees and studies the research objects. Bryman (2012) argued that:

> The central point of orientation in ontology is whether the social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they should be taken as social constructs that are built from perceptions and the actions of the social actors.

Two clear distinctions are made in ontology: objectivism and subjectivism (Bryman 2012; Saunders et al., 2009). Bryman (2012) defined objectivism as the ontological position that reiterates that the social phenomena and their connotations exist independently of social actors. Therefore, objectivism implies that social reality is external to social actors.

Objectivism embraces realism and conflicts with this study's standpoint because individuals employ their cognitive values and experiences to filter and perceive the social and organisational contexts that surround them.

However, subjectivism incorporates assumptions of humanities and arts and asserts that social reality is the result of perceptions and consequential actions of people or social actors (Johannesson & Perjons, 2014). In ontology, subjectivism embraces conventionalism and social constructionism. According to Bryman (2012), constructionism or constructivism refers to the social phenomena and their related meanings, which are continually accomplished by people. The assumption is that social phenomena and its groups are produced through social interactions that are in a constant state of revision. Under constructivism, the researcher can consider the ways in which social reality is a continuation of the accomplishments of social actors rather than external to them or one that limits them (Saunders et al., 2009). Constructivism also holds the view that people construct meaning through interactions that vary in time and place (Bryman, 2012).

Oral (2019) asserted that reality is not entirely or absolutely known; researchers have to convert or transform it into a 'perceived reality' that arises from a series of ontological assumptions. Moreover, Oral (2019) claimed that ontology in leadership seeks to identify the essentials that pertain to leadership and conceptualise the association between various essentials of leadership. This ontological stance serves as the guiding principle of this study, seeking to uncover the lived experiences, perceptions, and strategies of resilient leadership amid the ongoing changes in Saudi Arabia's higher education sector brought about by Vision 2030.

Moreover, as Souba (2014) argued, ontology relates to the nature of being a leader by exploring the underlying foundation of an effective leader. Ontology approaches the exploration of resilient leadership from the perspective of leaders' lives and personal experiences, rather than mere theorisation or conceptualisation. The relevance of this philosophical position is thus directly tied to the very core of the study, aiming to provide a comprehensive and authentic understanding of resilient leadership within the specific context

of the Saudi higher education system. To achieve this, a researcher focuses on the context in which the leader's thinking, speaking and doing arise and then locates their unique characters.

Therefore, in terms of ontology, the current study adopted a subjective (constructivist) stance, treating leadership as a subjective social construct that arises from personal values, perceptions and experiences. In addition, considering the significant economic transformation that is occurring in Saudi Arabia's higher education because of Vision 2030, the current period of change presents challenges that require resilient leaders who are willing to take risks, embrace challenges and exhibit positive thinking for a forward-looking future. Therefore, a subjective ontological approach allows researchers to delve into the context that shapes a leader's thinking, speaking and actions (Souba, 2014). By adopting this approach, the researcher aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the influences and dynamics that shape the meanings and experiences of leaders in Saudi Arabia's higher education institutions. Thus, the chosen ontological stance is integral to achieving the aims of this study, providing a solid basis for exploring, understanding, and interpreting resilient leadership within the context of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. This approach recognises the value of exploring multiple perspectives from different participants, allowing for a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the study topic.

4.2.2 Epistemological

Saunders et al. (2009) defined epistemology as the assumption about knowledge in terms of what constitutes acceptable, valid and legitimate knowledge and how people can communicate knowledge to others. Understanding the implications of epistemological assumptions in choosing a research method, its strengths and the limitation of the research findings is crucial (Saunders et al., 2009). Two paradigms exist in an epistemological approach: positivist and interpretivist (Bryman, 2012).

Positivist epistemology is concerned with collecting and analysing generalisable facts in a controlled setting in a causes-effect relationship for the hope of a bias free and objective approach (Johannesson & Perjons, 2014). The approach is concerned with linking topics in terms of cause and effect and then generalising the findings to a wider population from a sample. In natural sciences, positivism is the dominant research background and in social

sciences, positivists view their research as being similar to that of the natural sciences (Johannesson & Perjons, 2014). Therefore, the ethos, methods, analysis and interpretations of social science positivists is similar to those in the natural sciences (Bryman, 2012). In a positivist approach, the researcher is an independent observer of a social reality that is viewed through the lenses of external forces and is in line with ontological objectivism (Saunders et al., 2009).

However, objectivism is concerned with viewing the world through its actors. The interpretivist paradigm affirms that social research is interested in people rather than objects and researchers should be concerned with the meaning of phenomenon for people (Bryman, 2012). Interpretivists claim that people and their institutions differ fundamentally, reflecting the distinctiveness of humans against the natural order (Johannesson & Perjons, 2014). People's actions cannot be understood from outsiders' observations because actors have different intentions and the best way to understand a phenomenon is from an individual's interpretation (Johannesson & Perjons, 2014). Interpretivism is concerned with individuals because their interpretations are crucial, warranting a researcher to put effort into investigating a phenomenon from within. Therefore, interpretivism is in line with constructivism in ontology (Bryman, 2012).

In this study, an interpretivist orientation was adopted because it was important for the researcher to view people as a source of knowledge construction (Oral, 2019). The aim of this study was to explore the presence and relevance of resilient leadership among leaders in the Saudi higher education sector for achieving transformative strategic visions for the country, including Vision 2030. To achieve this, the researcher interacted with university leaders to understand their leadership practices, characteristics, roles and applications (Oral, 2019; Souba, 2014). According to Johnston (2014), a philosophical foundation is important for determining a methodological approach. Therefore, the discussions in the previous paragraphs were aimed at building a philosophical foundation to use in this study. The aim of this study was to describe, understand and interpret the nature of resilient leadership among Saudi Arabian higher education leaders. From an interpretivist point of view, a researcher should understand the motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences that are bound by time and context (Souba, 2014). Therefore, the researcher interacted with leaders

to understand what shapes their understanding and characteristics and how they apply them in their roles as leaders. In addition, people's perceptions of a specific situation are vital for depicting and comprehending their social reality. Thus, a qualitative method is regarded as the most suitable approach for addressing the study questions.

4.2.3 Deductive and Inductive Reasoning

In this study, the inductive reasoning approach was selected to understand leaders' perceptions, experiences, thoughts, and practices in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. Saunders et al. (2009) emphasised that a research project involves the use of theory, which raises important questions about the design of a project. Two contrasting approaches are adopted in the reasoning that is used by researchers: deductive and inductive reasoning. Cooper and Endacott (2007) asserted that research is undertaken to test a theory (deductive approach) or to develop a theory (inductive approach). According to Williams (2007), qualitative studies build premises in accordance with inductive rather than deductive approaches. In a qualitative study, various observational elements prompt questions that a researcher seeks to explain. Cooper and Endacott (2007) argued that qualitative research can be a part of a deductive research approach in which individual or focus group interviews are used to refine a hypothesis. However, inductive research requires a qualitative approach to build a theory (Cooper & Endacott, 2007).

In inductive reasoning, the researcher infers the implications of the findings for the theory that prompted the study. The researcher feeds the findings back into the theory and the research findings that are associated with the domain of enquiry. According to Yin (2009), most qualitative studies use an inductive approach that starts with the topic of enquiry without much theory or conceptualisation. The researcher begins with specific observations and measures, detects patterns and regularities in norms and then formulates tentative hypotheses that can be explored before determining general conclusions about theories (Collis & Hussey, 2009). The approach addresses generalisations by drawing inferences from observations (Bryman, 2012). According to Saunders (2009), inductive reasoning understands rather than describes and is concerned with the in-depth treatment of reality that is linked to context. The sample in inductive reasoning is small (Saunders et al., 2009). However, inductive reasoning

is less concerned with the need to generalise than deductive reasoning, in which a sufficient sample size is necessary to produce results that have generalisable conclusions (Collis & Hussey, 2009). The aim of this study was to understand leaders' perceptions, experiences, thoughts and practices in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. To achieve this, the researcher adopted inductive reasoning, which facilitates the collection of data that is relevant to the topic of interest. The study is interested in conducting specific observations and measures, detecting patterns and regularities in norms and then formulating tentative hypotheses that can be explored before determining general conclusions about theories (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

4.3 Research Method

In this case, the researcher adopted an interpretivist paradigm using an inductive approach, which are associated with qualitative studies (Saunders et al., 2009; Williams, 2007). The researcher adopted a qualitative approach rather than a quantitative one to avoid the necessary distance that is required in a quantitative approach because of the strict measures that guide researchers and participants (Bryman, 2012; Malterud et al., 2016; Shaheen & Pradhan, 2019). Furthermore, through a qualitative approach, the researcher interpreted the findings to gain a deeper understanding of the social phenomenon that was been studied. Yin (2009) asserted that qualitative research is rooted in investigating the meanings individuals ascribe to their lives under real-world conditions and seeks to represent the views and perspectives of the participants. Further, Yin (2012) elaborated that qualitative research encompasses the study of the contextual conditions within which people live and operate. Additionally, it offers insights into emerging concepts that may explain human social behaviour. In this study, the researcher's objective was to capture the events and emerging ideas that relate to the concepts and practices of resilient leadership within the academic context, considering the influence of social, institutional, and environmental factors.

According to Creswell (2003, 2014), there are three major approaches to research: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research. Creswell (2014) further argued that qualitative research is a holistic approach that involves discovery and is an unfolding mode that occurs in the natural setting, enabling the researcher to develop a level of detail from a

high level of involvement in the actual experiences. The choice of these methods uses the paradigmatic position that is adopted by the researcher.

Qualitative research was the best way for the researcher to listen to and observe the university leaders in the context of this study. Principally, the following reasons informed the choice of a qualitative research methodology for the purposes of this study: Qualitative research allowed the researcher to identify issues from the perspective of the university leaders, which facilitated a deeper understanding of their meanings and interpretations of events (Hennink et al., 2011). Qualitative studies involve the use of in-depth interviews with participants on issues that pertain to their natural settings, offering the researcher a comprehensive understanding of the participants' overall experiences and the ability to interpret meanings within familiar contexts (eds. Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 4). Further, a qualitative approach gave the researcher the opportunity to study the experiences and meanings in detail through interviews with participants about their perceptions over time. In this study, qualitative interviews were used to gain the perceptions, experiences and understandings of resilient leadership among university leaders in Saudi Arabia.

Aspects of leadership are relative, dynamic and ever changing; hence, it is impossible to perceive a person's unique experiences and meanings through a common lens. Therefore, by interacting with and developing trust with participants, the researcher can gather rich and in-depth data. For this study, this aspect of qualitative research was important for meeting the study's objective, which was to understand resilient leadership in higher education leaders and its influence on Saudi Vision 2030. To achieve this, the researcher needed to study the phenomenon according to the leaders' perspectives, which was facilitated by the qualitative study approach. A qualitative researcher has the role of a passionate participant (Bryman, 2012), which enables the researcher to uncover data that may not be visible if collected quantitatively. Therefore, in this study, the researcher uncovered data by actively engaging in the process of data collection with the interviewees to ensure that all the facets of leadership challenges were uncovered. By providing participants with opportunities to share their perspectives through qualitative interviews, the data that were obtained became grounded in a genuine platform of relevant experiences.

4.3.1 Case Study

Creswell (2007) claimed that there are five approaches to qualitative enquiry: narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic and case study. Yin (2012) argued that the selection of research approach is influenced by the nature of the research and, more importantly, the research questions that are being addressed. The nature of this study is to explore and understand resilient leadership among leaders in the higher education context in Saudi Arabia. A case study is defined as the exploration of an issue through one or more cases within a specific system, such as a particular setting or context (Creswell, 2007). The term 'case' encompasses a wide range of entities, including individuals, social communities (such as families), organisations and institutions (Flick, 2009). Similarly, Gillham (2010) offered a perspective that aligns with the aforementioned view on the meaning of 'case,' but expanded it beyond just its physical interpretation, emphasising that a 'case' is a subject of enquiry and a unit of human activity that is closely connected to the real world. This unit can only be understood within its surrounding context and exists in the present moment, merging with its environment to such an extent that it becomes challenging to delineate precise boundaries. The use of a case study approach is highly suitable for achieving the objectives of this study because it allows for the exploration of resilient leadership among leaders within their real-life contexts. This is essential because leaders' experiences, practices and cognitions cannot be separated from their university contexts.

According to McNeill and Chapman (2005), case studies are widely used in social sciences research because they provide detailed and immersive information about the specific case that is being studied. When a study aims to address questions about the 'how' and 'what', a case study approach is often considered the preferred option (Alam, 2021). Cohen et al. (2007) suggested that case studies offer a unique portrayal of real individuals in real situations, enhancing the understanding of concepts, unlike abstract theories or principles. Given the study's constructivist ontological orientation, which perceives reality through the lens of its actors (Johnston, 2014), and interpretivist epistemological orientation, which emphasises the meaningfulness and importance of what people say (Leitch et al., 2010), a case study approach was considered the most appropriate for this study. To address the study questions effectively, it was essential to conduct interviews with leaders to gather

comprehensive and in-depth information that would facilitate a better understanding of the dynamics and characteristics of resilient leadership within the context of Saudi universities. Case studies enable study participants to express their perspectives independently, regardless of the researcher's viewpoint (Cohen et al., 2007), which was precisely the intention of this study.

The question of whether to employ a single case study or multiple case studies is another aspect to consider. In social sciences research, the case study approach typically focuses on a single case, such as an individual, an organisation or a community (Bryman, 2012; McNeill & Chapman, 2005). The decision between single and multiple case studies is influenced by various factors, including the nature of the enquiry, research questions and objectives (Yin, 2012). Using multiple cases allows for comprehensive and holistic descriptions, leading to a deeper understanding of the case under investigation (Gustafsson, 2017). The strength of a multiple case study lies in the studying of several cases, each within its own unique context and with distinct characteristics, while still benefiting from the advantages of a qualitative design (Gustafsson, 2017). In addition, the findings that are produced from a multiple case study are robust and trustworthy (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Thus, this study employed a multiple case study approach (three universities) to gain an in-depth understanding of resilient leadership among leaders within the Saudi Arabian higher education context.

4.3.1.1 Cases

Bryman (2012) asserted that in qualitative research, sampling revolves around purposive sampling, which is essential for selecting the units, including the organisations, people and departments that directly relate to the research questions. Purposive sampling is defined by Bryman (2012) as non-probability sampling in which the goal of sampling is to obtain cases in a strategic way that ensures that the sampled cases are relevant to the research questions. In this way, the research questions aid in indicating the units and the guidelines for who should be sampled. The goals of the study drive the sample choice that is made by the researcher (Creswell, 2012).

Furthermore, Bernard (2002) highlighted the importance of respondents' availability, willingness to participate and ability to effectively communicate their experiences and

opinions. Among the various sampling techniques that are available, the purposive approach was considered the most suitable for achieving the objectives of the current study. The aim was to collect responses from leaders, capturing their experiences, perspectives and beliefs to accurately depict the aspects that were targeted in the study. According to King (2004), in a study that aims to make realistic assumptions about interview data, there should be a sample that represents the most important distinctions within the target population that is being investigated. King (2004) further argued that increasing the number of viewpoints that are collected through interviews enhances the validity of an analysis. Therefore, the use of purposive sampling, as the most suitable method for selecting case studies (universities), allowed for the attainment of a comprehensive understanding of academic leaders' perspectives, their leadership practices within their respective universities and the concepts that are under investigation in this study.

The study focuses on the Saudi context, particularly Saudi higher education. Government universities in Saudi Arabia are closely monitored and funded by the government and adhere more strictly to government visions than private universities (AllahMorad & Zreik, 2020). This influenced the sampling decision to focus on public universities because they are under greater scrutiny from the government to demonstrate effective leadership to achieve Vision 2030. Public universities, being large, multi-faculty institutions, enrol up to 95% of the total number of students in the country (AllahMorad & Zreik, 2020). The government heavily invests in these universities to modernise the education system and to upskill students in line with the economic transformation that is outlined in Vision 2030 (Alharbi, 2016).

In line with this reasoning, three public universities were chosen as case studies for this study according to their compliance with the sampling criteria, namely, that leadership practices were clearly guided and looked to implement the educational targets, methods and practices that are outlined in Vision 2030. The assumption was that public universities are funded by the government and would possess stronger incentives and face greater pressures for their leaders to adapt and implement changes in response to the policy targets that are outlined in Vision 2030. Given that higher education is directly regulated and reviewed by the government, it logically follows that the Vision 2030 commitments to raising educational standards in line with national economic development goals should be reflected, internally,

in their leadership as well. Hence, this study selected three cases of established universities from the whole population of higher education institutes whose scale and status differed. Including more universities would not significantly add to the research results or provide a broader representation of opinions, findings and implications. In addition, because of time, budget and size constraints, it was not feasible to include all public universities in Saudi Arabia.

4.3.1.2 Participants

The process of participant selection is mainly influenced by the study's goals and its research type (Flick, 2009). Consistent with most qualitative researchers (Coyne, 1997), this study used a purposive sampling method to select the participants for the study. Purposive sampling uses theory to determine who (and how many) people to sample (Coyne, 1997). The purposive method for the sampling of participants aims to select information-rich cases that will clearly address the research question (Patton, 2014). Consequently, all participants in this study were officials in leadership positions within the three universities (cases) that were studied. To capture a variety of perspectives on resilient leadership being applied in various contexts within universities, the researcher targeted deans and heads of departments from various colleges and departments. These leaders were chosen due to their responsibilities for spearheading changes within their respective universities, a key component of achieving the goals outlined in Vision 2030. Their positions gave them significant involvement in strategizing, decision-making, and implementing changes related to Vision 2030, thereby offering valuable insights into the practical application of leadership practices. A total of 18 participants from three public universities (cases) were interviewed. Specifically, six leaders were interviewed from each university (see Chapter 5 for more details).

4.3.2 Data Collection

Several tools are applicable for data collection in a qualitative study, according to Creswell (2014). These include field notes, observations, document analysis, interviews and discourse analysis. Creswell (2014) described data collection as a circle of interrelated activities that includes but also goes beyond data collection. Creswell asserted that data collection includes locating a site or individuals, gaining access and developing rapport, purposeful sampling,

collecting data, recording information, resolving any field issues and storing data (Creswell, 2014). In this section, the methods of data collection that were selected for the current study are discussed.

4.3.2.1 Interviews

Interviews, as a qualitative data collection method, offer valuable insights into human behaviour and experiences (Fontana & Frey, 2005). In qualitative research interviews, the dynamic interaction between an interviewer and interviewee plays a crucial role in the social production of knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), interviews are particularly well suited to studying individuals' understanding of the meanings in their lived world, describing their experiences and self-understanding and clarifying and elaborating their own viewpoints about their lived reality. Unlike surveys, interviews often yield higher response rates because of increased participant engagement and motivation to express their thoughts (Robson, 2011), allowing for a more comprehensive collection of information. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) emphasised that interviews go beyond casual conversations by employing a structured and purposeful approach to questioning and attentive listening and aim to obtain rigorously tested knowledge.

The qualitative interview approach enables researchers to engage in a conversational mode, allowing the interview to develop into a personalised social interaction for each participant. Interviews offer a distinct advantage by enabling researchers to delve into participants' experiences, thoughts, feelings and intentions that cannot be directly observed (Corbetta, 2003). In addition, through the observation and documentation of non-verbal cues, interviews provide a deeper understanding of verbal data, a dimension that is not achievable through other methods, such as surveys. Another strength of interviews lies in their flexibility because researchers can adapt their lines of enquiry in response to unexpected participant responses (Robson, 2011). Moreover, interviews facilitate the exploration of unpredictable themes that may emerge during the interview process.

Creswell (2014) discussed the acceptability of researchers studying their own organisation, acknowledging the advantages of easier data access but also the potential for biased results. However, in this study, the researcher made a deliberate choice to not interview participants

from his own university to mitigate any potential limitations. Instead, the focus was on leaders from other public universities, using a total of 18 leaders from three different institutions. The researcher engaged with these leaders to gain insights into their perceptions and experiences, aiming to understand and interpret their reality. It was crucial to highlight their perspectives as social actors in the specific context under investigation (Corbetta, 2003) and to draw meaningful inferences that reflect the challenges that they face.

4.3.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Bryman (2012) described two types of qualitative interviews. Unstructured interviews are those in which researchers use an *aide-memoire* as a brief set that prompts them to address a range of issues. In some cases, the researcher may dwell on a single question and let the interviewees respond freely while responding to the points that seem worthy of being pursued (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Such an approach is more conversational in nature. The second type is semi-structured interviews, which are commonly used in qualitative research and often recommended when there is a list of principal themes, issues and questions to explore (David & Sutton, 2004). These interviews offer flexibility, allowing the order of questions to be adjusted according to the flow of the conversation. Although an interview schedule is used (see Interview Questions in Appendix 1), the interviewer can pose additional questions as required. Corbetta (2003) elaborated on semi-structured interviews, stating that the sequence and phrasing of questions are at the discretion of the interviewer. Interviewers, within each topic, has the freedom to steer the conversation as deemed fit, ask appropriate questions in their chosen words, clarify unclear responses, prompt the respondent for further explanation if needed and establish their unique conversational style (Corbetta, 2003).

In this study, the semi-structured interview was crucial because of its inherent flexibility. In exploratory studies such as the current study, such interviews are often used to comprehend the relationships among contextual factors (Saunders et al., 2009). These interviews, although posing questions on a variety of themes, also provide the flexibility to modify the order, phrasing and structure of the questions in accordance with participant responses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The semi-structured interview was also selected as the method for this study because of its capacity to structure questions in an open-ended manner, eliciting rich

answers without directing the participants. This approach encouraged the leaders to provide valuable insights and perspectives on leadership practices that might not have been garnered through alternative methods thus underscoring the additional benefit of this interview format. Further, the interviewer can provide explanations as needed to clarify meanings, ensuring the relevance of the information that is gathered and stimulating further insights into the research topic. Moreover, semi-structured interviews balance the power dynamics between the interviewer and the interviewee, allowing the latter to freely express their unique and complex perspectives (Hammersley, 2008). This method provides participants with an opportunity to contribute their thoughts and views, enriching the interview and facilitating its flow. Consequently, the interviewer can comfortably steer the conversation within a specific topic area, phrase questions spontaneously and maintain a conversational style while staying focused on the predetermined subject (Patton, 2014). The semi-structured interview approach enables the researcher to ask questions and to follow up on the replies to facilitate rich, detailed answers.

To facilitate the participation of respondents, an authorisation letter was obtained from three universities in English and Arabic (see Appendix 2) to conduct this study. The researcher identified the leaders and found their contact details through the respective universities' websites. The researcher contacted them directly through emails and provided them with participation information (see Appendix 2) and the consent form (see Appendix 3) as well as the authorisation letters that were obtained from the university. The researcher scheduled meetings with the participants who showed interest and agreed to volunteer and participate. Given the COVID-19 pandemic's legal restrictions and safety measures, interviews were conducted via video call through Zoom since it allows the researcher to observe body language and voice inflection. King (2004) confirmed that phone and Internet interviews can be conducted when face-to-face interviews would be difficult or inapplicable. The duration of each interview ranged from 45 to 60 minutes. The interviews were conducted in Arabic because it is the mother tongue of all the leaders who participated. In addition, because the researcher is a native Arabic speaker, using Arabic as the medium of communication during the interviews facilitated the open expression of ideas, creating a more comfortable and effective communication dynamic between the interviewer and interviewees.

4.4 Data Analysis

Once the researcher collects all the required data, the ongoing process of analysing the data commences to aid in understanding and interpreting the information. According to Yin (2012), analysing qualitative research is not a totally undisciplined endeavour. Bryman (2012) claimed that there are three approaches to qualitative data analysis: analytic induction, grounded theory and thematic analysis. Thematic analysis can be described as a method that involves identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within a data set. This approach aims to provide a detailed and comprehensive organisation and description of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Editors Marks and Yardley (2004) stated that thematic analysis is the most used and widespread form of qualitative analysis. It is employed to derive and validate conclusions (Boyatzis, 1998). For this study, thematic analysis was most appropriate because this study is interpretivist in nature and because of the high level of flexibility of thematic analysis, which allows a researcher to define codes and to maintain an open mind when investigating phenomenon.

According to Bryman (2012), a framework that aids in ordering and synthesising data can be used. The aim is to develop an index of central themes and their subthemes, which are represented in a matrix. Through reading and re-reading the transcripts, the data are organised into themes (Bryman, 2012). In this study, the process of analysis began with familiarisation with the data, followed by identification of the categories of data and the associations between these categories. Once the themes or repeated patterns were developed, they informed further exploration. The themes were arranged hierarchically and the codes were labelled under each identified theme to allow for similar codes to denote a cluster of related themes.

4.4.1 Thematic Analysis

After data collection, the next step is to analyse the data. To analyse the data, this study followed the thematic analysis approach that uses NVivo. Thematic analysis involves an ongoing review of the data throughout the process (Carson et al., 2001). In line with Braun and Clarke (2006), the six phases of thematic analysis are explained in the paragraphs that follow.

Phase 1: Familiarity with data

In the first phase, researchers familiarise themselves with the data by creating a start list or potential codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that researchers are advised to thoroughly read the data repeatedly to identify potential patterns that are occurring in the data. First, given that the data were originally in Arabic, the Arabic transcripts were translated into English. This was done at the Certified Translation Office by a professional translator who is a native Arabic speaker, fluent in both languages, and holds a PhD in English language, to ensure the most accurate and quality of the translation.

The transcribed interview data were then reviewed by the researcher multiple times to gain familiarity with the data. During the reading, the researcher took notes on key points and ideas from the interviews to serve as the foundation for data coding. This process of reading the transcripts multiple times before formally coding them allowed the researcher to identify major themes in the data as a starting point for coding. Finally, the interview transcript was uploaded and imported into the NVivo qualitative software package for data coding.

Phase 2: Generation of codes

This stage involves the coding of the entire data set. This involves identifying vital features of the data that might be relevant to answering the research questions. This step involves identifying those key features in the data and starting to code for them (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Coffey and Atkinson (1996), coding allows a large data set to be reduced into more simplified and smaller units, which helps to create further categories in the data. During the process of reading the interviews and generating ideas, initial codes started to emerge. The researcher initiated the coding process by coding the interviews and collating data that was relevant to each code as the initial stage.

Phase 3: Searching for themes

The third phase is combining the codes into potential themes and collecting all the relevant data associated with each potential theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This stage involves the clustering of similar codes into themes as well as the examination and consolidation of related

codes to generate themes and subthemes. The researcher compiled a list of potential themes and subthemes, in addition to all the coded data extracts from this study, in NVivo.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that this stage involves the researcher reviewing the potentially identified themes to ensure that they align with the study's requirements. The fourth phase also includes evaluating the relevance of the identified themes to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this phase, as from reading, these codes were generated after reviewing the transcripts. Subsequently, the candidate themes underwent a meticulous review in which they were compared with the interview data to determine whether the developed themes were meaningful and coherent. This review and coding process was conducted personally by the researcher. Further, the researcher thoroughly reviewed the entire data set multiple times and identified themes that were valid and consistent with each other within the study's requirements.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

In the fifth phase, the process of defining and naming themes took place. The researcher identified and enhanced the themes that would be used for data analysis, analysing the content within the data to explain the underlying aspects of each theme. In addition, a thorough analysis was conducted, which involved the documentation and elaboration of each theme's narrative. The main themes were identified and succinctly named. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), it is important for researchers to avoid excessive subthemes to prevent overlapping and to ensure that the theme's essence is readily understood by the reader.

Phase 6: Finalising the write-up

According to Braun and Clarke (2013), the aim of this phase is to write a concrete thematic analysis of the complex data set that answers the questions of the study in a simplistic manner. In this phase, a comprehensive report, which outlined the main themes that emerged from the data, was generated for each university thereby forming within-case analysis.

4.5 Validity

The main principle of research is to ensure that the knowledge that is gained fulfils certain standards and criteria. This is to ensure that the conveyed knowledge is accepted by the wider community. The research paradigm that is adopted aids in judging the relevance and quality of the research. According to Bryman (2012), there are three main ways to evaluate research: validity, reliability and replicability.

Reliability, often associated with quantitative studies, refers to the extent to which results are consistent over time and accurately represent the total population under study. In qualitative research, such as in this study, the aim is not to gain generalisable data because of the relatively small sample size but to gain a deeper understanding of a particular cultural context (Creswell, 2012). However, to make this study generalisable, the researcher targeted three public universities and different university administrators who had different ranks, ages and experiences to help to make the findings more generalisable. The researcher kept a detailed record of the research sample and noted the ways that the data would be treated and included. A diary helped to verify the systematic process that the researcher undertook.

The primary objective of validity is to ensure the accuracy and correctness of the conclusions that are drawn from a study. Validity pertains to the level of agreement and coherence between the research findings and interpretations and the participants' subjective understanding of the realities that are being studied (King, 2004). In this study, validity was ensured by verifying all the research steps to ensure that they were conducted according to the set criteria. First, the researcher diligently addressed potential challenges associated with bias, including favouritism, prejudice, and partiality, throughout all stages of the study, namely sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Such issues are critical to consider in qualitative research to ensure the validity of the findings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). To mitigate the risk of bias, the researcher strategically selected a diverse sample of participants from three different public universities, encompassing a variety of disciplines, age groups, locations, and colleges. Additionally, the sample included leaders occupying different positions, such as deans and heads of departments, thereby ensuring a breadth of perspectives and minimising the potential for bias in the study.

Second, the findings incorporated all the relevant perspectives that were shared by the interviewees, accurately transcribed and without any alterations. Furthermore, the researcher refrained from using leading questions where possible or questions that could involve technical language or assume specific answers. This approach ensured that the data collected remained authentic and unbiased, truly reflecting the diverse perspectives of the participants. Third, during the data collection process, the researcher ensured that all respondents were university leaders, serving as deans and heads of departments at the time of the study. This selection criteria was established to ensure that the participants could provide first-hand and reliable accounts of their leadership styles and the implications thereof for Saudi Vision 2030. Being in such key positions, these leaders were well-equipped to offer expert-level knowledge and insights about their roles and their significance within the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia.

4.6 Ethics

For this study, the ethics application was accepted and deemed to meet the requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council's 'National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)'. The Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee granted approval on 17 February 2021, under application number HRE20-185 (see Appendix 4). The researcher adhered to the ethical guidelines outlined by Victoria University. Before the data collection, participants were provided with the consent form and a participants' information sheet, which contained information on consent to participate in the project and confidentiality as well as a summary of the project, including its background and objectives, in English and Arabic (see Appendix 2). The researcher obtained approval from all the research participants. Participants were informed by the researcher that their participation in the interviews was voluntary and they were assured of their right to withdraw or discontinue their involvement at any point. All participants successfully completed the interviews without encountering any impediments or challenges in this study. The researcher placed great emphasis on maintaining confidentiality and protecting participant data thereby fostering trust among the participants. In this study, the researcher replaced the names of participants with symbols for complete privacy and to preserve the participants' rights. The

researcher followed a letter code instead of using the names of the participants and added a number according to the number of participants in each case.

4.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the methodological framework of the study was introduced. It commenced with a description of the overarching paradigm and qualitative case studies that were employed to explore resilient leadership among leaders in the Saudi higher education context. Then, the chapter proceeded to discuss the data collection method, focusing on the chosen semi-structured interview approach, which was conducted via video call due to the COVID-19 pandemic's legal restrictions and safety measures. The merits and justification for the choice of thematic analysis as the data analysis method were outlined. Moreover, the chapter addressed the reliability and validity of the study in addition to the ethical considerations that the researcher took into account when undertaking the study. In the upcoming chapter, the findings of the case studies are presented.

Chapter 5: Findings

5.1 Introduction

This findings chapter presents and analyses the findings of three case studies. The data was collected via semi-structured interviews with 18 deans and heads of departments at three universities in different regions in the northern, central and southern parts of Saudi Arabia. The study used thematic analysis as a method for data analysis, which involved breaking down qualitative data into smaller components and categorising them according to themes or patterns. The chapter provides an overview of the key themes and patterns that emerged from the analysis as well as relevant quotes and examples. The aim of the study was to provide insights into the presence of resilient leadership among leaders in the Saudi higher education sector and its role in driving transformative strategic visions, particularly Vision 2030, for the advancement of the country and significance for the broader field of leadership in this sector.

5.2 Overview of Case Studies

The study focuses primarily on the Saudi context, specifically, the realm of Saudi higher education. As a result, the participants hold significant importance in representing the core of their personal and university leadership practices given their extensive experience and established careers in the field. The section explores three public universities (case studies), referred to as University A, University B and University C. Each case study involves six participants, including deans and heads of departments. Each case study discusses the findings that are derived from in-depth interviews and supported by relevant evidence in the form of interview quotes that were gathered in the field. This approach enhances our understanding about whether leaders from each university (A, B and C) demonstrate resilient leadership. The case studies commence with a comprehensive discussion of the background of each case, offering the necessary context for subsequent analysis.

5.3 Case Study University A

This study explains the adoption of leadership in the Saudi higher education sector and the realisation of Saudi Vision 2030, the characteristics of resilient leadership that are currently exhibited by higher education sector leaders and the characteristics that are linked to the achievement of Saudi Vision 2030.

5.3.1 Introduction to University A

University A is a public higher education institution in the north of Saudi Arabia that was established in 2005. The university offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs in various fields of study, including science, engineering, education, humanities and social sciences, and has a diverse student body of approximately 15,000 students. University A is committed to promoting academic excellence, research and innovation in alignment with the goals of Saudi Vision 2030. The university has international partnerships and collaborations with other institutions across the world and its campus provides students with access to a range of facilities, including libraries, sports facilities, student organisations and housing options. Overall, University A is dedicated to providing high-quality education and research opportunities to its students, contributing to the development of Saudi Arabia's knowledge-based economy and advancing the country's Vision 2030.

5.3.2 Overview of Participants

The participants in this study were deans and heads of departments, selected for their ability to provide valuable insights into the nature of leadership at the university. It is noteworthy that all participants in this study were male. This reflects the current demographic reality of leadership positions within the Saudi higher education system, where male leaders predominantly occupy these roles. This composition is indicative of the broader cultural and societal context of Saudi Arabia, where traditionally, leadership roles, as with many government sectors in the country, have been male-dominated.

The present study focuses on exploring the perspectives of the dean and heads of department about the nature of leadership at the institution. The study aimed to investigate the ways that

leadership practices at the institution contribute to the attainment of its goals and objectives. Table 1 provides a summary of the participants who were involved in the study.

Table 5.1: Summary of Case A Participants

Participant	University Code	Age Group	Gender	Educational Background	Position
P1	A	40–50	Male	PhD Science	Dean
P2	A	40–50	Male	PhD Science	Head of department
P3	A	50–60	Male	PhD Education	Head of department
P4	A	40–50	Male	PhD Engineering	Dean
P5	A	40–50	Male	PhD Science	Dean
P6	A	30–40	Male	PhD Business and management	Head of department

The participants in this study were carefully selected because of their ability to provide valuable insights into the nature of leadership at the university. It was ensured that they had the relevant expertise and experience that was required to meet the research study's objectives. The study focuses on the perspectives of three deans and three heads of departments, who provided valuable insights into the nature of leadership at the university.

5.3.3 Alignment and Duties of Academic Leadership to Achieve Vision 2030

This theme focuses on the Saudi government's required education reforms in line with its Vision 2030 plan and the ways that higher education institutions must align with the government's overall vision. This theme's content includes operating within regulations,

designing ambitious objectives and alignment with Saudi Vision 2030. In terms of designing ambitious objectives, participants viewed it as necessary because the departments, faculties and the university at large were expected to respect what the Saudi authorities wanted. Furthermore, participants spoke about the issue of operating within the regulations and considered it important to not deviate from them. Participant 5 agreed with this line of thought when he stated that abiding by set rules and regulations was necessary to achieve the government's Vision 2030 plan:

> Indeed, there are objectives for the university and then, depending on them, we start looking for the objectives related to our faculty. So, when I design the objectives of the college, I make them in line with the university vision.

Improving the educational process and getting Saudi universities to become globally competitive and in line with Vision 2030 are a part of the main objectives of the university. Participant 4 shared this position:

> Yes, of course there are many objectives for each university that try to reach them, which are derived from the vision of the Kingdom. One of the most important objectives is international accreditation, which we received in the past years but the national accreditation is needed in some faculties.

The participants emphasised that their responsibilities as academic leaders revolved around academic, administrative duties and planning. Participants in this study reported that they were also responsible for designing the objectives of their faculties. Participant 5 said, 'I design the college's objectives'. Participant 1 echoed this, saying that he would 'follow up, develop the strategic plan'. Participant 1 added that another academic duty of the leadership was to 'keep pace with the labour market'.

Participant 3 appeared to lament the range of his duties as dean, which included preparing and following up the strategic plan, when he stated:

> There are many burdens to do as a dean, including the presidency of the faculty council, preparing and following up the strategic plan, nominating the academic department and nominating other administrative positions.

Participant 6 stated that the 'quality of the general output in higher education must be high'. Participant 2 noted that for a positive result to be achieved in the quality of outputs of universities, adequate support was needed. To this end, Participant 2 stated that 'without support, we will not be able to achieve any positive results' in the quality of university output. Furthermore, Participant 2 concluded by stating that for the university to play a significant role in the actualisation of Saudi Arabia Vision 2030:

> We have to look again at the role of the Ministry of Education for Research and Technology. There are certain tasks that need to be done by the ministry but unfortunately nothing has been done yet. Doing so will play a very positive role in achieving the vision of the universities.

5.3.4 Stress Coping Strategies

This theme focuses on the ways that participants cope with the stress that comes from the new changes to the Saudi university system and the expectations of meeting the demands of Vision 2030. These include taking a break, engaging in sports, sharing and spending time with friends and family, engaging in religious activities, reading, avoiding negative people, communicating with the team and being results-oriented. Participant 3 said that when encountering a new change, he attempted to research and learn about it to discover strategies to effectively cope with it:

> When I face a new change, I try to read about it and find methods to overcome it.

> I think that finding solutions is the leader's task and stressful matters are matters that need solutions. By reading, by forethought, it means that thinking outside the box is always our goal and always part of our behaviour.

Another thing that participants did when they were under pressure or stressed at work was spend time with family and friends:

> I usually leave my office and go to the vice-dean's office and I share time with him. Or, I go have a cup of coffee at the office of the director of the administration in a place other than the place where I usually am. (P3)

Participant 6 needed to avoid stressful situations whenever these arose:

> I always distanced myself from stressful relationships and the environment of laboratory
> equipment.

Participant 2 was similar to the other participants but also made an effort to meet with and relate to other people to cope with stress-related issues:

> For me, I distance myself from the work environment and go to a coffee shop with a group
> of people that I can openly talk to. They are colleagues in the department who can help me
> manage this and achieve what is required. I will give you an example. Once, we had some
> pressure workload and so I called a colleague and we went to a coffee shop on a Friday.
> We met that day until 12 midnight. We rearranged everything without papers, laptops or
> anything and we just talked. Then we had Saturday off and on Sunday we started the work
> and managed to deal with this.

Some of the participants expressed anxiety over the changes that were introduced into the university in the quest to achieve Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Participant 3 indicated that he was worried about adapting to the changes that were introduced as a result of the Vision 2030 demands. He stated, 'Of course, I should be worried. For example, we are talking about [University A]. How do I not worry? I worry or I do not have an affiliation'. Participant 5 also acknowledged feeling worried about the changes associated with achieving Vision 2030, using the word 'sure' to describe their sentiment. Participant 3 noted that some employees were apprehensive about the changes, saying, 'They're afraid because sometimes they're unsure about what's happening'.

Participant 1 stated:

> If the leader has a vision and these visions are always trying new things then this is what
> worries me. I belong to the school that they call Transferring Knowledge. I am part of the
> schools that transfer knowledge and transfer experiences and we start from where others
> ended. We often have a foundation or the bottom foundation to build up so it is not possible

to start from scratch but to start from where the others ended and this reinforces our understanding among the leaders in the college that this orientation is a positive and established trend.

Some of the participants acted negatively by avoiding situations in which they could fail because they did not want to take the blame for the decisions of committees with which they disagreed. Instead of engaging other committee members to see their point of view, these participants simply left the committees to which they were appointed when they made decisions that they disagreed with or that seemed wrong to them. Participant 2 indicated about this issue:

> I used to experience psychological pressures during committee meetings. I always used to challenge any decision that I did not agree with and that was very exhausting. I wanted to leave this committee because it affected me negatively when everyone was always against you. So, I left.

Participant 2 confirmed that he put pressure on his team after 'assigning them tasks'. This tactic may hinder the development of sustainable bonds with other people in the workplace. Participant 3 said that stress leads to being upset and can undermine the ability to work well with colleagues and subordinates: 'My employees know I am upset as my voice becomes louder.'

5.3.5 Positive Mindset Practices

This theme considers the importance of having a positive thought system and the ways that participants deal with changes at the university. Hence, the difficulties that are associated with implementing a change can be effectively dealt with via a positive mind. Participant 6 anticipated and welcomed changes and this enabled him to adapt to these changes, which were not unwelcome. Participant 6 commented, 'The changes are positive and I benefited from them'.

For Participant 4, owing to the importance of his administrative office as a dean, he understood the need to be adaptable: 'I am a dean so I have to be changeable, follow and adapt to the new plans made by the new president of the university.'

Participant 5 acknowledged that his responsibility put him in the position of motivating others to accept changes and new ways of doing things: 'First, a feeling of responsibility encourages me to motivate the huge number of faculty staff even if I am under stress. I try to be positive and careful about my word choices.'

5.3.6 Sustainable Social Bonds

This theme focuses on the methods that are used by participants to foster sustainable relationships with their team members within the university in line with the objectives of Vision 2030. Specifically, team members provided mutual support to each other to accomplish their assigned tasks, particularly during periods that had high levels of stress or workload:

> I still remember the day when one of my employees came to my office to resign due to an overwhelming workload. After discussing the matter with him, I discovered that he was also dealing with other personal problems that affected his ability to focus and remain calm. I reassured him of my commitment to fairness and equality and I promised to support him within the limits of my responsibilities. To be honest with you, it is true that individuals differ in their abilities and intelligence. As a leader, I believe it is crucial to give everyone a chance to prove themselves and to provide training and encouragement to those who may be less confident. (P1)

Sustaining close relationships with team members is crucial for fostering strong bonds. When individuals feel valued and supported within their team, they are more likely to work effectively and collaboratively. Participant 3 noted that 'any teamwork will be done smoothly if the group members feel they are a family with the leader'. Similarly, Participant 1 emphasised the importance of workplace colleagues to their success, stating that 'they are like brothers to me and I believe that they are the core of successes'.

Participant 3 emphasised the importance of trust within a team of academics. He stated that 'your team must trust you because if they do not trust you, the work will not be successful because the success of any work is the trust of the team in its leader'. As a result, trust is essential for everyone to perform his or her duties, regardless of whether a supervisor is present.

To make, sustain and strengthen bonds among a team, a team leader and members need to be attentive. When attention is given to team members, specifically, to the ways that they handle an assignment, it becomes easy for team leaders to see where they can be adaptable in their approach. Attentiveness gives them ample opportunities to identify where adjustments can be made so that people are not overloaded:

> First, I see the percentage of student numbers to their professors because I believe that this percentage must be ideal or within the range so that we can reach the objectives realistically. In addition, this percentage allows me to consider other administrative issues. In such a way, I can reduce the workload and make a comfortable working environment as much as I can. (P1)

Participant 5 justified the importance of teamwork, stating that 'adopting the philosophy of teamwork and do the best is our strategy to overcome obstacles'. This makes the institution resilient in the face of challenges. Participant 5, in support of teamwork, stated that 'we always work on the plans with a team spirit so we have quick meetings to discuss the different opinions in case there is a threat to the college'. This open line of communication between every member helps them to agree on things and to develop a strong bond.

Furthermore, collaboration with others includes working with others on a project or seeking expertise from someone else to make a decision. For example, Participant 5 emphasised the need for collaboration:

> I think that when we are one team, we should not make individual decisions. I mean, we work together according to a system. In other words, we will sail on this ship, we sink together or we reach our goal together. There are no individual decisions. The decisions taken in the college are collective decisions.

Participant 4 said that being sociable must not go beyond certain limits. Strengthening sustainable bonds may require a rewards system for increased efficiency in achieving stated goals. Participant 4 stated:

> As a dean, I reward the members by reducing their academic load in teaching to have time for research. So, all the members are working as one team to achieve the objectives of the faculty. Rewards also inspire and the moral aspects are very important. It means that we

should say, 'Guys, the one who is going to finish the work today or within a week will be honoured and greeted by the university chancellor and will receive a certificate of appreciation'.

Participant 2 revealed that the support that was given to team members went beyond helping them to achieve new goals and a shift in organisational policies to help them to develop and progress in their career. These include:

> Improving their qualifications and helping them to overcome their challenges to achieve the required academic publications and level. This will, accordingly, increase the ranking of the university among other universities. Therefore, once I started my position as head of department, the first decision I made was to record all the data about the scholars so that we receive red flags for those having any troubles and accordingly we can guide them.

Being sociable is important for managing pressures from work and forming bonds among individuals in an organisation. Participant 2 stated, 'We used to arrange a fun day twice in each semester where we gather and have dinner somewhere private'.

Patience is another virtue that should be cultivated for sustaining bonds within a workplace team. Patience and maturity overcome the unproductive habits and attitudes that are shown by colleagues. Participant 4 stated:

> As a dean, you have to ignore some people's behaviours because each one has his own stresses and obligations in his life. So, the dean should be like a leader and he must have enough patience, like a father in the home, and try to solve issues between professors in a friendly way.

To be flexible, one must be reasonable and open to criticism. Participant 2 demonstrated his flexibility by stating:

> If you deal flexibly with the work team, this will reflect positively on it, which will encourage them to initiate creativity and new ideas. Using a strict leadership style will not help and will only make the team accomplish the minimum required. If the method is flexible and smooth, this will help in achieving the goals and lead to new proposals and ideas.

5.3.7 Self-Leadership Capabilities

This theme centres on the emotional and behavioural actions that leaders take to achieve their department or faculty's objectives in line with the government's Vision 2030 economic strategy. Self-leadership involves a process of having self-direction and self-motivation, specifically, when it comes to completing significant and complex tasks. It encompasses taking responsibility for one's actions, setting goals and holding oneself accountable for achieving them. One of the characteristics of resilient leadership is self-reflection. Self-reflection may refer to serious thoughts about one's character or actions. With terms of leadership, it involves having thoughts about one's decisions and approach to leadership. Participant 5 stated that reflecting on a decision depended on how much experience one has had before reaching a decision:

> The more experience someone has, the less the likelihood of having to reconsider decisions. I think this depends on the experience and the more experience you have, the more accurate your decisions are. I mean, as a dean, I try to be accurate before making my decisions to avoid changing my previous decisions but this does not mean that if there is a need to change a decision I will not do it.

Self-motivated individuals' peculiar circumstances motivate them. For example, someone who wants to make a statement to refute a stereotype may be unusually motivated to achieve this goal. This was the case for Participant 2 who was determined to prove that he could be exceptional irrespective of having gained a PhD qualification. Another factor that may result in self-motivation is patriotism. This is reflected in the words of Participant 5: 'Indeed, my responsibility towards my society and the sake of achieving Allah's grace are the real energies that push me toward my goals.'

Participant 1 stated that their source of motivation was derived from the prevailing Vision 2030, which had proved to be a support to them. This was revealed in his respective statements:

> Indeed, I am always supported and motivated by the vision of His Highness, the Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, may God bless him. He is a real supporter of all sectors in the Kingdom, including education.

However, Participant 3 emphasised the importance of planning:

> Without a doubt, each stage has its own set of responsibilities. Most of the time, we have a plan and this plan serves as a precursor to the next plan. For example, if I am planning for the coming year, my indicators are to complete this year's plan.

Meanwhile, Participant 5 stated: 'Finally, they feel that I know every single detail in my workplace.'

This conclusion from his workplace colleagues must have resulted from the way that he approached doing things. Participant 3 mentioned:

> In any endeavour, the work must always be flexible. When we are planning, for example, we say that the programme that you follow must be flexible because if your programme is not flexible, you have a problem. This applies whether you are in the deanship, anywhere, or even engaged in a volunteer activity. Flexibility must be considered in all instances to ensure smooth operations. It can suddenly rain, or other unforeseen circumstances may arise.

Participant 4 added: 'As a dean I have to be adaptable and follow the new plans of the new president of the university.'

5.3.8 Higher Education Changes

Certain changes were noted by the academic leaders of the university is to help to achieve Vision 2030. The role of leadership is very important for improving the quality of education because the success of education is largely determined by effective leadership. Without effective leadership, education is not achieved properly and optimally. The participants agreed that there were many changes that created a new system of ways that universities operate. In this new system, administrative changes, contract employment and privatisation became the norm. In addition, e-learning was introduced and, when discussing the number of changes that had occurred, four participants confirmed that such changes were many. Participant 4 observed that 'there is a new plan to shift from the two-semester system to a three-semester system' and Participant 5 noted that 'many things are under improvement in all domains'. Participant 3 provided more detail, stating that although there were obvious

changes, some participants became worried about whether they would be able to meet the conditions and pressures that were inherent in the renewed contracts. As was stated by Participant 2:

> Let me tackle this from a different angle. I will talk about the contracts of the professors. At the beginning of every year, each one of them becomes worried about the renewal of their contract, which is related to having scientific research conducted and published.

Participant 3 noted the observed changes as follows:

> This is a natural thing with changes in life, with the vision now of the Kingdom to which it is heading. It is natural that you see such kinds of changes … Currently, all the formations, whether you are talking about the administration, have changed. Even the names have changed. We had civil service, now it has become human resources. As a term, many things have changed, for sure.

New systems were introduced in universities. Participant 6 stated: 'In the Kingdom, there is now a new education system, for example, we had a new university president appointed seven months ago.'

In addition to more spending on scientific research, Participant 4 revealed that there was a planned review of the academic calendar: 'In addition, improved outputs and plans are continuously updated.

Expanding on this, Participant 3 observed:

> Online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic was completely new and sudden and this required us to deal with it as quickly as possible with all of its requirements, such as preparing teachers for this task, rearranging timetables, checking the network, et cetera.

5.3.9 Case Study University A Summary

This section synthesises the findings from the interviews conducted at University A, summarising the core themes that emerged to provide a deeper understanding of resilient leadership within the specific context of University A. These themes include the alignment and duties of academic leadership to achieve Vision 2030, stress coping strategies, positive

mindset practices, sustainable social bonds, self-leadership capabilities, and higher education changes. Each theme represents the unique strategies and approaches adopted by the leaders at University A in responding to the challenges presented by Vision 2030 and the changing landscape of Saudi higher education. These themes, taken together, provide a comprehensive picture of how University A's leaders are navigating this period of significant transformation.

Table 5.2: University A Summary

Theme	Summary
Alignment and duties of academic leadership to achieve Vision 2030	The participants emphasised the importance of aligning higher education institutions with the government's vision, operating within regulations, setting ambitious objectives and effective planning to achieve Vision 2030's objectives. As academic leaders, they have a responsibility to design objectives, carry out administrative duties and plan effectively to achieve the objectives of the government. The participants stressed the need for better output from universities to effectively achieve the national vision, emphasising the importance of quality in the general output of higher education and the need for adequate support. They called for a re-evaluation of the Ministry of Education's role in research and technology to achieve the objectives of the universities and the government's vision.
Stress coping strategies	Strategies mentioned include researching and learning about new changes, spending time with family and friends, avoiding negative people, engaging in sports and religious activities and being results-oriented. Participants also mentioned the importance of finding solutions to stressful situations and thinking creatively. Some participants preferred to distance themselves from stressful relationships or environments whereas others made an effort to meet and relate to colleagues who could help them to manage stressful situations.
Positive mindset practices	Participants believed that a positive mindset was necessary for successful transformation or adaptation. They welcomed and anticipated changes and viewed them as positive opportunities. Flexibility and adaptability are considered essential for successful adaptation to new situations. Participants also felt a sense of responsibility to motivate others to accept changes and new ways of doing things.
Sustainable social bonds	Strong relationships among team members are essential for success in accomplishing tasks, particularly during periods of high levels of stress or workload. Trust, attentiveness, collaboration and sociability are key factors in fostering sustainable bonds. Rewards for increased efficiency and progress in career development can be used to strengthen these bonds. Patience, maturity and flexibility are also important virtues for maintaining sustainable bonds in the workplace. Overall, the focus is on creating a supportive

Theme	Summary
	environment in which team members feel valued and supported.
Self-Leadership capabilities	Participants noted that decision-making depended on experience and self-motivation can come from personal goals or patriotism. They also discussed the need for flexibility and adaptability in leadership as well as motivation that was derived from the educational approach in Saudi Arabia
Higher education changes	Academic leaders believe that effective leadership is essential for improving the quality of education to achieve Vision 2030. Universities have undergone administrative changes, contract employment and privatisation as well as introducing e-learning. In addition, there are plans to increase spending on scientific research and to shift from a two-semester to a three-semester system. The COVID-19 pandemic required universities to adapt quickly to online learning. Some faculty members had concerns about contract renewal requirements that were tied to publishing scientific studies.

5.4 Case Study University B

University B is a public research university in central Saudi Arabia. It was established in 1957 and has a total student enrolment of more than 70,000 students in undergraduate and graduate programs across various disciplines, including science, engineering, medicine, law, humanities and social sciences. The university is committed to promoting academic excellence, research, innovation and community engagement, in line with the goals of Saudi Vision 2030. University B has a diverse student body and faculty and collaborations and partnerships with leading universities and institutions worldwide. The campus provides students with access to a wide range of facilities, including libraries, laboratories, sports facilities, student organisations and residential options. University B is recognised for its contributions to scientific research and scholarship and its researchers and faculty members have published influential research and received international awards and recognition. Overall, University B is dedicated to providing high-quality education and research opportunities to its students and to advancing the social, economic and cultural development of Saudi Arabia.

5.4.1 Overview of Participants

The study that was conducted at University B aimed to explore the perceptions of participants about the functioning of leadership within the institution, specifically, the personnel that held leadership positions. The participants that were involved in the research were interviewed and their responses were analysed. The following table provides a summary of the participants who took part in the study.

Table 5.3: Summary of Case B Participants

Participant	University Code	Age Group	Gender	Educational Background	Position
P1	B	40–50	Male	PhD Medical sciences	Dean
P2	B	40–50	Male	PhD Education	Head of department
P3	B	50–60	Male	PhD Science	Head of department
P4	B	40–50	Male	PhD Humanities	Dean
P5	B	50–60	Male	PhD Science	Dean
P6	B	40–50	Male	PhD Humanities	Head of department

The participants in this study were carefully selected because of their knowledge and experience concerning the information that was needed for the study, ensuring that they were qualified to provide valuable insights. The study aimed to gain insights from the experiences and perspectives of three deans and three heads of departments about the nature of leadership at University B.

5.4.2 Alignment and Duties of Academic Leadership to Achieve Vision 2030

Alignment is an ability to pay full attention to what other people convey or express and having the skills to offer appropriate responses. Four participants in this study identified that the university's leaders were aware of the government's Vision 2030 responsibilities. Thus, according to Participant 3, for the universities, 'They have to be focused and aware of this critical period'.

Participant 1 pointed out that the faculty objectives were revised on occasions: 'Regarding the objective, yes, they are in line with the university's objectives but with some changes as a result of the rapid changes this time.'

In the same vein, Participant 5 agreed with the university's objectives and emphasised the importance of teamwork to realise the set goals:

> In the university, we have strategic plans and we function as one team. So, the implementation plan should be aligned with strategic goals because it represents quality work requirements.

Participant 6 stated that the objectives that were created for the department were ambitious and in line with the overall goals of the university: 'Yes, our objectives are ambitious simply because they are in line with the university's objectives. We are in the same boat.'

Planning is a pivotal duty that was brought to the fore by leaders. Participant 5 asserted: 'As a dean, I am concerned with every single detail about planning and supervision in all departments.'

These plans were the vehicles through which the strategic plan of the government was to be executed. Participant 5 said:

> In addition, I am sure that implementing these plans will be aligned with operational plans for university and, in turn, answer to the strategic plan for the Ministry of Education.

Participants highlighted the support that was required by the university to play its role in achieving Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. The identified areas of support include financial and infrastructural support, support for university independence, clear instructions, internal reforms and improved outputs. Some participants specifically mentioned that financial and infrastructure support was crucial for universities to function effectively in fulfilling their role to realise Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Participant 5 indicated that two decisions were required to make the university function effectively in line with Vision 2030:

> First, to grant universities independence in terms of financial and administration. This will really motivate universities and we will have very distinguished universities and the competition will become greater.

Participant 6 noted that 'some internal reformations are needed' for the university to function effectively in line with Vision 2030. Furthermore, Participant 1 stated that there was a need to 'support their financial abilities' of universities.

5.4.3 Stress Coping Strategies

The theme emphasises the ways that participants coped with the stress that came from the changes in the university to achieve Vision 2030. Through these coping strategies, participants aimed to manage stress and to maintain their wellbeing while navigating the changes in the Saudi university system and working towards Vision 2030. These include taking a break, engaging in sports, sharing and spending time with friends and family, engaging in religious activities, reading, communicating with the team and being results-oriented. For example, for engaging in religious activities, Participant 4 stated that he 'read the holy Quran'. This response from the participant demonstrated his devotion and commitment to spiritual matters as an important part of their lives in which they find strength to withstand pressure.

Participant 1 engaged in sports and family meetings to ward off stress from work. This helped to refresh his system before returning to work: 'I do sport exercise and stay with my family and friends. It is effective.'

Participant 4 stated:

> When I am under stress, I go for a walk and do sport. During the coronavirus pandemic, I did sport by walking and inhaling fresh air, which gave me refreshment to rethink again about my work tasks.

Other methods that were devised by participants to cope with the pressures of work include self-motivation and aiming for good results no matter what. Participant 5 stated that he continued to motivate himself:

> I try to push myself and stay motivated. I encourage my team to look for achievement rather than looking for pressure. It is a matter of time and once the task is done, the pressure will be a positive energy when we feel the happiness of achievement.

Whereas Participant 6 said:

> I keep in touch with my team and I hold meetings from time to time to remove the source
> of pressure because I think that pressure comes from that feeling of dissatisfaction.

Participant 2 stated that he depended on discussing work matters with his team. Participant 2 said that he held regular meetings to hear from others: 'Once I receive their points, I feel relaxed.' Misunderstandings that arise from poor communications are cleared during these meetings, which helps to reduce pressure from work. These underscore the importance of communication as a way of reducing stress at work.

5.4.4 Self-Leadership Capabilities

This theme centres on the emotional and behavioural actions that leaders took to achieve their department or faculty's objectives in line with the government's Vision 2030 economic strategy. Self-leadership involves a process of having self-direction and self-motivation, specifically, when it comes to completing significant and complex tasks. It encompasses taking responsibility for one's actions, setting goals and holding oneself accountable for achieving them. To solve problems effectively, it is important to analyse the problem and the situations that led to it. When faced with problems, Participant 1 invited everyone in his team to analyse them:

> I invite my work team to become involved when dealing with them. I analyse the challenges
> carefully and then I study the reality of each obstacle according to their priorities.

To minimise the impact of challenges on the team, it is crucial for leaders to be decisive when facing them. This involves making quick and timely decisions when challenges arise. As one participant explained, 'Some challenges are internal causes, such as being assigned to some administrative tasks, and I deal with them as required and I try to adjust to them quickly' (P1). Another participant said, 'When we face sudden cases, we deal with them according to the nature of the case' (P2). By being decisive in addressing challenges, leaders can effectively manage unexpected situations and ensure that their team can navigate them successfully.

Participant 4 emphasised the importance of an individual being self-motivated enough to achieve desired goals:

> Of course, self-passion is the source of inspiration that I rely on. It is very important. I mean, people's passion for themselves is important. I have a passion for my work and I love my work with pleasure. So, I harness this passion not only for myself but also for my team as we work towards achieving our goals.

Effective appropriation and task delegation are crucial for promoting efficient teamwork. When individuals are assigned specific tasks, they understand their responsibilities and can work towards achieving their goals. As Participant 5 explained:

> People are different in their talents. This directs me to appropriately choose the right person for the right place. Then, I invite them to cooperate and to share experiences.

Having a results-oriented mindset is a crucial attribute of self-leadership because it enables leaders to focus on achieving their goals even in the face of challenges. As one participant described, 'I deal with them as any task in my work' (P6). Another participant noted, 'Depending on the case, sometimes changes are needed to proceed' (P2).

Participant 4 stated that consultation was his approach to completing tasks:

> Consulting with others around me is my method … I consult and read. I see I have previously trained and met the trainee. I have no problem. Ask and see the practices that were in place and come back and tell you that reading is the best thing.

Participant 4 further highlighted the importance of managing challenges that may arise: 'I think nothing will be considered a challenge if we are focused and really convinced about what we do.'

Participant 6 expressed that their ambition to achieve department objectives was driven by their belief in the department's future and its preparedness to handle any scenario, which meant that they were unaffected by potential challenges:

The future of the department is the real source of motivation that makes me so ambitious towards achieving the objectives … I think that any department must be ready for all scenarios so I can say that they do not affect my department.

5.4.5 Positive Mindset Practices

This theme revolves around the significance of having a positive attitude and optimistic mindset, which can help individuals to effectively tackle the challenges that are associated with implementing changes in universities, especially given the many changes that are occurring. By having a positive outlook, leaders can maintain their motivation, overcome obstacles and adapt to new changes. According to Participant 3, it is a part of personal growth:

The flexible aspect is inevitable and you must change because the transformation or adaptation adapts to the new situation you are in.

Participant 5 was aware of the potential obstacles that may arise from new developments and policies and had taken steps to anticipate and prepare for them:

Yes, it will be challenging and it must be. I believe that no improvements will be gained unless we have challenges. Designing a plan without challenges means that you will not progress.

Participant 6 believed that challenges should not discourage him and he should maintain a positive outlook towards them. He believed that facing challenges could lead to exceptional outcomes and that difficult situations had the potential to create extraordinary results:

[It] does not prevent me from looking positively toward it … finally, challenges make miracles.

5.4.6 Sustainable Social Bonds

These are the strategies that were used by participants to develop sustainable relationships with their teams to achieve the desired objectives of their department and faculty, in line with the government's Vision 2030. Participant 1 believed that the strong close bond within a team helps to overcome obstacles:

We have a big role in overcoming some obstacles, especially that, as humans, we cannot neglect the role of feelings in this matter.

Clarity and transparency are other virtues that can sustain the bond in a team. Transparency involves involving everyone in the decision-making and achievement of the team. Participant 4 agreed with this sentiment:

If I have any observations, within five minutes, I call the employee to ask and discuss and the same thing I expect from the employees. Sometimes I even open the field for them to come criticise but you have to give your perception, your views and what are the things that we have done wrong... Give me solutions for them.

Participant 2 also noted his support for colleagues by helping them with challenges:

Given that we are one team, we help each other and individual differences disappear.

Constant communication enhances a sustainable bond in a team. Participant 2 held regular meetings to provide him with an avenue to communicate with others: 'I hold regular meetings to hear from others. Once I receive their points, I feel relaxed.'

Furthermore, collaboration with a team includes working on a project or seeking expertise to make an informed decision. Participant 3 said:

[I] must convince them that I am a leader not a boss. A positive relationship creates a positive work environment.

Participant 6 said:

They all cooperate and work together with passion. This helps the department to achieve its vision.

A relationship that is built on mutual respect encourages resilience in the institution. Everyone feels important and respected, which increases their self-esteem. According to Participant 6:

The relationship is strong and based on mutual respect. We all work to achieve the same objective. It is difficult for a person to lie to himself. I tell you that I do not have an internal

human aspect that affects me but I told you about the issue of dispensing. The issue is managed with great professionalism, far from moods and personal matters.

5.4.7 Higher Education Changes

Higher education improvement is an essential topic for any country that is striving towards the realisation of its long-term visions, such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. In this context, the role of leaders in guiding and directing universities towards achieving these goals is crucial. Participants in a study on higher education improvement in Saudi Arabia highlighted several critical factors in this process, including the issuance of regulations, prioritising research and practice, using technology and online learning and the active involvement of teaching staff and students in the university's development. In addition, participants stressed the importance of universities addressing the needs and measures of the community, encouraging competition through attracting distinguished students and nominating excellent professors and focusing on quality research publications to enhance global competitiveness. Therefore, effective leadership is necessary to promote continuous improvement and innovation in higher education, aligning with societal needs and technological advancements to achieve the desired outcomes of the vision.

Participant 1 felt that 'issuing instructions and regulations for universities' would help the universities to effectively play a significant role in the realisation of Vision 2030 of Saudi Arabia. Participant 3 shared this opinion, stating that, 'The only challenge is knowing how to keep in progresses'.

Participant 6 believed that the role of the university was to enable transformative change through action research and to take actions to address society requirements. According to this participant, the focus should be:

> The actual and real needs of the community and this is a major starting point for any leaders: to be able to function and develop from the actual needs and measures of the community.

The university can 'encourage the spirit of competition between them' by attracting 'distinguished students and nominating distinguished professors' (P2). Participant 2 thought

that this would 'help students gain suitable knowledge and help the university obtain higher ranks'.

Participants reported that an increase in quality research publications contributed to making their universities globally competitive. Participant 5 stated:

> I think what is new now is the focus of the research. Universities now pay much attention to this point.

However, Participant 2 stated that the Saudi education system had introduced it as a policy:

> As mentioned earlier, the new policy of nominating professors and supporting the research field.

Participant 6 indicated that their universities were doing excellently in the 'academic, scientific and society services' domain. In the same vein, Participant 2 stated that the changes had improved every area of the university, 'especially in the field of research'. Participant 3 held the view that the changes in the university had made 'supporting research' one of the central focuses of the university. Furthermore, Participant 2 stated that 'the changes in the educational sector of Saudi Arabia influenced the nomination of excellent professors'.

5.4.8 Case Study University B Summary

The following conclusions are from the interviews that were conducted at University B. These findings show that resilience leadership is evident at this institution.

Table 5.4: University B Summary

Theme	Summary
Alignment and duties of academic leadership to achieve Vision 2030	The study found that the university leaders were aware of the government's responsibilities and the faculty objectives were in line with the university's objectives but with some lack of clear instructions because of the rapid changes. Planning is a pivotal duty of leaders and they need to supervise all departments to execute the government's strategic plan. Financial and infrastructure support, university independence, clear instructions, internal reforms and improved outputs are required for universities to fulfil their role in achieving Vision 2030. Participants

Theme	Summary
	suggested granting universities independence in terms of finance and administration, internal reforms and support for their financial abilities to make them function effectively in line with Vision 2030.
Stress coping strategies	The participants in this study shared various coping mechanisms to manage the stress of work. Some engaged in religious activities, such as reading the Quran, whereas others turned to sports, family meetings or walking to refresh their minds. Self-motivation and aiming for good results were also important strategies for some participants. Regular meetings with their team were seen as a way to reduce pressure by removing misunderstandings and improving communication.
Self-leadership capabilities	The participants in this study shared insights on self-leadership and leadership styles. Effective problem-solving requires careful analysis of the problem and timely decision-making. Leaders should be decisive in addressing challenges to minimise their impact on the team. Self-motivation and a results-oriented mindset are important attributes of effective leadership. Effective task delegation and appropriation promote efficient teamwork. Consultation with others and effective management of challenges are also crucial for successful leadership. Overall, the study highlights the importance of effective leadership skills for achieving department objectives and successfully managing challenges.
Positive mindset practices	This theme highlights the importance of having a positive attitude and optimistic mindset when overcoming the challenges that are associated with implementing changes in universities. Participants believed that having a positive outlook helped in maintaining motivation, adapting to new changes and overcoming obstacles. They saw challenges as a part of personal growth and anticipated and prepared for them. Facing challenges having a positive outlook can lead to exceptional outcomes and create extraordinary results, according to the participants.
Sustainable social bonds	The participants shared strategies for developing positive relationships with their team to achieve their department and faculty objectives. They emphasised the importance of building strong bonds within the team, being transparent in decision-making, helping each other with challenges and maintaining constant communication. Collaboration and mutual respect

Theme	Summary
	were highlighted as crucial for achieving their goals and creating a positive work atmosphere.
Higher education changes	Participants discussed the improvements that were needed in higher education to help Saudi Arabia to achieve its Vision 2030. They suggested that issuing regulations and instructions for universities would help them to play a significant role in realising this vision. The participants emphasised the importance of supporting research, attracting distinguished students and professors and addressing the actual needs of the community. They also noted that these changes have positively influenced every area of the university, particularly in the field of research. Overall, the participants believed that higher education could be a transformative force in society and effective leadership was needed to enable this change.

5.5 Case Study University C

University C is a public higher education institution in southern Saudi Arabia. The university was founded in 2006 and offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs across various fields of study, including science, engineering, business, education, humanities and social sciences. University C has a diverse student body of more than 25,000 students and is committed to promoting academic excellence, research, innovation and community engagement in line with the goals of Saudi Vision 2030. The university has collaborations and partnerships with leading universities and institutions worldwide, providing its students with international exposure and opportunities. The campus provides students with access to a range of facilities, including libraries, sports facilities, student organisations and housing options. University C provides high-quality education and research opportunities to its students and contributes to the development of Saudi Arabia's knowledge-based economy. The university has a strong focus on the integration of technology and innovation in its teaching, research and community outreach initiatives. Overall, University C is committed to fostering a culture of academic excellence, research and innovation that prepares its students for success in their professional and personal lives.

5.5.1 Overview of Participants

The participants in this study were selected because of their ability to provide valuable insights into the issue of leadership at University C. The study aimed to gain insights from the experiences and perspectives of three deans and three heads of departments about the current leadership system and its critical role in achieving the strategic vision of the university. Table 5.5 summarises the participants who were involved in the study.

Table 5.5: Summary of Case C Participants

Participant	University Code	Age Group	Gender	Education Background	Position
P1	C	40–50	Male	PhD Humanities	Head of department
P2	C	40–50	Male	PhD Science	Head of department
P3	C	30–40	Male	PhD Education	Dean
P4	C	50–60	Male	PhD Science	Dean
P5	C	40–50	Male	PhD Education	Head of department
P6	C	40–50	Male	PhD Business and management	Dean

The study's participants are three deans and three heads of departments who were selected because of their ability to answer the research questions that were set out in the study. Their insights were crucial for gaining a better understanding of the issue of leadership at University C. The study provides valuable insights from the perspectives of these participants about the issue of leadership at the institution. The findings of this study can be used to inform future leadership development initiatives and to contribute to enhancing leadership practices at University C.

5.5.2 Alignment and Duties of Academic Leadership to Achieve Vision 2030

This theme focuses on the Saudi government's plan to modernise education in line with its Vision 2030. This theme's content includes being aware of the vision, operating according to the regulations, designing ambitious objectives and alignment of the university with the Vision 2030 statement. Participant 5 maintained that a proper understanding of the vision was a requirement for alignment because he thought that 'understanding the vision of the country is the key of aspiration'.

Participant 3 mirrored the sentiment of other participants in that he was aware of the overall vision of the KSA to have five of its universities ranked among the top 200 in the world. This

awareness gave a clear responsibility to each constituent unit to align with the vision. The participant said:

> The goals of a scientific research dean must be in line with the deanship goals, which are derived from the university goals, which are also derived from the country goals in general to achieve something specific. One of our deanship goals is to improve the quality of scientific research publications and increase the percentage of scientific research published in highly classified journals, which eventually helps the university improve its international classification and rank in international organisations, such as QS and Web Matrix. This will also achieve the goals set in the Kingdom's 2030 Vision, which aims to have five universities ranked in the top 200 universities worldwide.

In designing these objectives, Participant 1 hinted that departmental objectives were ambitious and aligned with those of the university:

> Yes, they are ambitious and we designed them to be in line with university objectives.

Furthermore, participants spoke about the issue of operating within the regulations and considered it unnegotiable for university management to deviate from them. Participant 3 agreed with this line of thought when he reported that abiding by set rules and regulations was necessary to achieve alignment with the KSA's vision:

> As a dean of scientific research, first, the dean abides by the rules and regulations set for Saudi universities, holds specific managerial roles based on the set regulations (administrative and financial).

Participant 2 suggested that every activity and decision was guided by the relevant regulatory authorities:

> I cannot make a different decision. I must follow what I am asked to do. This is a decision taken by either the university or the ministry. The ministry's decision is sovereign and I cannot as a dean divert from that.

Participant 2 went further to mention that the development of the KSA's Vision 2030 created the need for administrators to adapt and adjust quickly to the transformational change:

When the Kingdom's Vision 2030 was developed, it had a strong and major impact on us as administrators in all sectors because we needed to adapt, adjust and develop in line with it. Universities have a major role in serving the community and developing the environment.

5.5.3 Stress Coping Strategies

The theme of coping with stress that is generated by new pressures of work for achieving Vision 2030 is a crucial topic that affects individuals in various ways. Participants shared their strategies for managing pressure, including seeking the help of close friends, praying for assistance, indulging in leisure activities, seeking advice from leaders, appointing a counsellor and discussing matters with colleagues. These coping mechanisms can help individuals to navigate difficult times at work and to achieve their goals with greater resilience and success. This study delves deeper into the various strategies that were discussed by the participants and their effectiveness in coping with stress. Participant 1 stated: 'I pray to Allah for help to cope with the pressure.'

Participant 5 said that their strategy for managing pressure was to indulge in leisure activities that they enjoy while making a conscious effort to not allow work challenges and pressure to affect their mood: 'I enjoy reading books I like or watching movies I prefer.'

Participant 2 looked for close friends in the organisation who could help with certain pressures or directly sought the advice of the leader:

> For example, if the decision is related to work in a specific field, maybe talking to a friend who is in the same field or close to you is a good thing to do and I prefer this personally. Sometimes when I go through tough times, I have one or two or three friends that are close to me personally and I open up to them. Then, we discuss the matter until we reach an appropriate decision or the decision that will achieve the goals of the organisation. Maybe every leader in the organisation would have a special team that he can closely open up to about his pressures and that should be independent from the other general team. Or, if possible, each leader can appoint a counsellor who would have enough experience to help the leader manage these tough and pressuring times. If every leader has such a close counsellor, he will definitely achieve the goals and pass through hardships.

Participant 3 stated that he met with colleagues to discuss matters to relieve pressure:

> Honestly, work pressure is a lot and I always go for openness and honesty at work in cases of certain pressures. I have a close person that I trust at work so I talk to him, which is one of the deputies. We discuss the matter and I might be right or wrong. This person gives advice and will try to calm down my mood in case I was upset. So, you turn to your friends and close ones.

The universities need to ensure that the current systems do not fall apart as a result of the unexpected issues that a strategic vision does not account for. It has been identified that change is a complex phenomenon because it involves uncertainty, risk, stress, a lack of motivation, a lack of clarity and negative (Gardner 2020). Participant 2 stated:

> There was some sort of unawareness of what was happening and no anticipation of what would happen based on these decisions. People were so used to the way things worked for so many long years and because such changes happen suddenly, there used to be some confusion and worrying and we used to ask, what will happen to the current programmes? And our colleagues who are working on these programmes, where will they go? A lot of people asked these questions around the college until it started to become clear bit by bit.

5.5.4 Positive Mindset Practices

This theme explores the ways that participants' positive mindsets can help them to navigate changes and challenges within the university. The participants demonstrated a willingness to embrace change and to overcome challenges using a positive attitude, viewing them as opportunities for growth. By maintaining a forward-thinking approach, motivating colleagues and prioritising the achievements of the faculty, university and Vision 2030 objectives, they contributed to the improvement of their institutions. Through their experiences, this theme presents insights into the impact of a positive mindset on individuals' ability to overcome adversity and to drive progress. Participant 5 stated:

> I deal with everything normally. I mean, I feel that whatever the case is I have to deal with it because it serves the faculty, university and Kingdom's visions. Change is a necessity in life. It is the evidence that you are alive. Yes, there are many changes, especially under the new vision of the Kingdom.

Similarly, Participant 1 had a forward-thinking approach to changes and new directives in his university. He maintained a positive attitude and motivated his colleagues, believing that the department would continue to excel and improve:

> I am always positive. I am sure that the department is excellent and things are going to be better too. So, I keep motivating them.

Participant 4 acknowledged that challenges are a normal part of the workplace but emphasised the importance of selecting the right people in the right positions and working hard to achieve objectives and meet demands:

> The challenges are available in any work and the future of the deanship is going to be improved by choosing the right person in the right position. Working hard, we can achieve all the objectives and demands.

Finally, Participant 6 anticipated the potential challenges that may arise with new developments and policies but felt prepared for them because he had the necessary capabilities to occupy the position and viewed the challenge as an opportunity for growth:

> There is no doubt that I did not accept to be in this place unless I had the necessary capabilities to occupy this position first and secondly, there is no doubt that it is a new challenge for me.

5.5.5 Self-Leadership Capabilities

This theme revolves around the emotional and behavioural strategies that leaders use to achieve their department or faculty's objectives. However, self-leadership capabilities refers to the process of being self-directed and self-motivated, specifically, when dealing with crucial and challenging work responsibilities. Participant 5 was motivated by a personal vision: 'It makes us motivated to move forward to achieve our vision that goes in line with the Saudi's vision.' Having a results orientation is an important attribute of self-leadership capabilities and helps to resolve problems. Participant 5 saw every challenge along the way as a part of his work: 'I deal with them as any task in my work'.

Leadership involves motivating a team to perform at an optimum level. Participant 1 revealed that his motivation was encouragement:

> I encourage my staff to work harder, especially in the field of research. I invite them to believe that all of what we are doing today will turn out good in the future.

Participants ensured that there was cooperation within the team. This is necessary for a team to function well when challenges emerge. Participant 5 stated:

> We deal with challenges cooperatively and when you feel that a great team is behind you, you feel that you are balanced.

Participant 2 stated that:

> I am a part of the strategic plan and I set the goals accordingly with the team as their leader. We gather as a team and we set the goals through group discussions. We draft a set of goals and agree on them together.

These statements emphasise the importance of cooperation, which helps to complete tasks. Participant 5 believed:

> Cooperation always is the key to success because it has many positive effects that make members ready.

Appropriating and task delegation is very helpful in making teamwork efficient. In this milieu, individuals that have specific tasks understand their responsibilities:

> I divide tasks up according to the limits of their abilities. (P5)

Participant 4 revealed that inviting everyone to strategically consider a challenge can result in a solution: 'Trying to simplify and dismantle them helps a lot in solving big problems.'

Participants were emotionally intelligent because they did not let their moods or those of others interfere or influence the tasks that needed to be accomplished. Participant 5 remarked:

> As I said, given that challenges and pressure are a part of any work, I prevent them from influencing my mood.

In all these, to be successful at self-leadership, the participants needed to be dedicated and hardworking:

> We work day and night to ensure the achievement of our objectives. I mean, this vision of the Kingdom requires us to do the best and this is what we really do. (P5)

Participant 2 thought that it was very pertinent to reflect on decisions because it provided an opportunity to ensure that one was doing the right thing:

> If I make a decision independently and then it turns out that it was not a good decision and I had the chance and the time to reconsider it, maybe by looking into the team's opinions, I would have a better mindset to make the right decision … Hence, from my point of view, it is important to love being successful, being excellent, being developed and applying the strategic plan in line with the Kingdom's vision. All this pushes me to take such measures and modifications.

The participant 2 underscores the importance of prompt decision-making in the interest of work, identifying it as a critical attribute of successful leadership:

> I make the decision as long as it is in the interest of work and I cannot delay it because one of the attributes of a successful leader is the ability to make decisions.

Participant 3's source of motivation was their faith in God and the understanding that 'you are going to work for a specific period and you are going to be asked about the objectives that you achieved'.

The desire to succeed in one's chosen career was the strong motivating factor for Participant 2:

> I want to succeed and advance in my career. That is why I want to change, to modify and to develop and I must be eager to learn, make decisions and explore new fields and experiments.

Another attribute of self-leadership is being proactive. This means that an individual must be prepared to handle any eventuality that may arise:

Managing a crisis is a very important part and it is a part of agile management and an attribute of a successful leader. Early realisation of the crisis, how to realise it and finding solutions. As a leader or in charge of the team or a member of the team. (P2)

Physical and mental strains, as well as burnout, are some potential work hazards that were faced by the university leaders because of the enormity of multitasking. This prompted participants to conclude that delegating responsibilities was necessary to ensure effective leadership. In line with this, Participant 2 highlighted the importance of dividing up the plan and putting people in charge of specific roles. According to this participant:

As a leader or in charge of the team or a member of the team, I specify certain goals for each team member because these goals are translated into projects and tasks … this is how to organise the work with a plan because without a plan or goals the work will be random and out of control for the leader and would not make sense for the team. That is why it is important for the leader to always understand the plan and for the plan to be timely and operational. In month X we will do one thing, in another month we will do another thing until the end of the year. This makes it a strategic plan with timely milestones, each one has a role to play and someone to supervise these roles.

5.5.6 Sustainable Social Bonds

The theme explores the significance of fostering positive bonds within a team, emphasising the leadership traits of honesty, transparency and directness to establish trust and prevent communication gaps. It highlights the need for all team members, including the leader, to work collaboratively and effectively to achieve the desired results and to develop sustainable bonds. The importance of teamwork, passion and a healthy environment is also emphasised to ensure optimal performance and goal attainment. Ultimately, the theme emphasises that a strong team bond can help to overcome obstacles and to create a productive work environment. Participant 4 believed:

There are many features, such as honesty and directness, to avoid a lack of trust to develop positive bonds. To a large extent, trust is important for everyone to perform his duties, irrespective of whether a supervisor is watching or not.

Participant 3 said that his team members were hardworking and 'warriors'. In developing sustainable bonds, everyone, together with the team leader, has roles to play to achieve the desired results. When individuals are working in the right place, they function well in achieving these goals. Participant 3 explained the importance of teamwork:

> They all work to serve the vision of the department and they are the most significant part of achieving the objectives. Honestly, the best preparation is about the right working team. So, from the managerial side, you must have the right leader and from the academic side, you must have the right team. For example, deputies and managers of research centres are linked to achieving your goals. That is my point of view: creating a healthy environment of academics, managers and employees who are all working towards the same goal. For example, now, as a dean, you have goals you want to achieve and if your employees are not on the same page as you, you will be struggling a lot to achieve them. (P3)

> Deputies also have their own special roles. For example, the deputy I have in the men's section is responsible for the managerial and financial matters related to the deanship. The deputy in the women's section is responsible for the ethics of the scientific research and quality and development. So, each one knows his or her role and it was tough for all of us at the beginning until we learned from each other and reached the current situation. (P3)

Participant 5 stated that a good relationship 'makes them motivated and ready, mentally and physically, for any task and any challenge'. This underscores the understanding that people function and work efficiently when they perceive the environment to be healthy. The strong bonds within a team help to overcome obstacles:

> This is an important incentive … this encourages all employees to work hard even if the incentive is not financial and not attractive. (P5)

Participant 3 emphasised the importance of being sociable to make a team functional:

> Personal relationships ease the burden on the employee. They give him motive. That is why in a healthy working environment, there must be a leader who smiles, who motivates, who supports. This is the motive that makes personal relations have a positive impact on achieving work goals.

Participant 2 believed that letting others decide on certain matters was a part of being flexible:

> These relationships have a positive influence. I should not be making a specific decision because I like someone or that person likes me, et cetera. The person responsible should be fair and objective while making his decisions. He should be able to maintain his connections and relationships with others in the team and at the same time nothing affects his decision-making.

5.5.7 Higher Education Changes

Certain changes were noted by the academic leaders if the university is to help to achieve Vision 2030. These include implementing administrative changes, contract employment and e-learning, which can be challenging but, ultimately, beneficial. It is also important to invest in public and private partnerships to encourage community participation in the development process. Four participants confirmed that several changes occurred in their university. The participants identified 'a new system of nominating academic staff and supporting the research' (P1). Participant 5 observed that 'there are many things indeed because of the Kingdom's vision'. One significant change that was introduced to the universities was e-learning. According to Participant 5, adopting e-learning was particularly challenging:

> This is a very big challenge and, still, so many others are upcoming. Some of these challenges are mitigated by the fact that it was anticipated by senior management, whether at country level, ministry level, university level or college level.

Participant 5 said that despite the challenges, e-learning was largely beneficial:

> For graduate students, it is excellent. We can discuss masters and PhD dissertations remotely in a very good manner. I was a part of two dissertation discussions in other university remotely: the student was in Dammam and the professors were from other cities while the supervisor was from a different university. It was exactly as if you were sitting together and discussing the topic in detail.

Changing the contract terms of faculty members from 'permanent' to 'contract' was also noted by the participants of this case. Participant 2 said:

The revision of contract terms, fixed tenures and specific remunerations were designed to increase staff motivation and competition.

Participant 2 viewed the changes as challenging because the availability of certain majors might not be suitable for some students in Saudi Arabia. According to this interviewee:

Earlier, each student at a certain stage were enrolled in the Islamic studies field or Sharia College. It was rare to find a student enrolling in the College of Medicine or Pharmaceuticals or Engineering. Now, the challenge is that students are enrolling in medicine, pharmaceuticals and engineering and not in the theoretical majors, such as management, education, et cetera. It is no longer the same as before. We have mentioned a part of this challenge as the privatisation of universities and relying on their resources. It is a very big and important challenge to offer majors that are suitable for the job market inside the Kingdom because it is always best to rely on the Saudi labour force only. This is a very huge challenge because most of the Saudi universities make most of their academic partnerships with foreign parties. So, the nationalisation of jobs and providing skills or national qualified labour is also a big challenge.

Investing in public and private partnerships was described as an avenue towards encouraging community participation in the development process. In Participant 6's words:

We are ready to say that we sign agreements with parties from the community and are ready to motivate our colleagues about the issue of the quality of scientific research and this, of course, needs time to develop this idea through the establishment of units that provide material and moral support to motivate the people.

5.5.8 Case Study University C Summary

The following are the primary conclusions that were derived from the interviews that were conducted at University C.

Table 5.6: University C Summary

No.	Theme	Summary
1	Alignment and duties of academic leadership to achieve Vision 2030	Participants in the interviews emphasised the importance of understanding and aligning with the vision, designing ambitious objectives and operating according to regulations. They also

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No.	Theme	Summary
		highlighted the need for delegation of responsibilities to ensure effective leadership and to avoid burnout. The participants spoke about the impact of the vision on their roles as administrators and the need to adapt quickly to the transformational change. The goal of Saudi Vision 2030 is to have five universities ranked among the top 200 universities worldwide. This requires a clear responsibility for each constituent unit to align with Vision 2030. Universities have a major role in serving the community and developing the environment.
2	Stress coping strategies	Participants shared several strategies for managing pressure, including seeking the help of close friends, praying for assistance, indulging in leisure activities, seeking advice from leaders, appointing a counsellor and discussing matters with colleagues. These coping mechanisms can help individuals to navigate difficult times at work and to achieve their goals with greater resilience and success. The study delved deeper into the various coping strategies that were discussed by participants and their effectiveness. Praying for help was a common coping mechanism that was mentioned by participants. Others preferred indulging in leisure activities, seeking advice from friends, leaders or counsellors or discussing matters with colleagues. The importance of open communication, honesty and trust in relationships with colleagues and leaders was emphasised.
3	Positive mindset practices	Participants demonstrated their willingness to contribute to the improvement of their institutions by prioritising the achievement of faculty, university and Vision 2030 objectives. The study presents insights into the impact of a positive mindset on individuals' abilities to overcome adversity and to drive progress. Participants suggested that change was a necessity in life and viewed challenges as opportunities for growth. They motivated colleagues and believed in the potential for improvement, highlighting the importance of selecting the right people in the right positions and working hard to achieve objectives and to meet demands.
4	Self-Leadership capabilities	Cooperation within a team, appropriating and task delegation and emotional intelligence are important attributes of self-leadership. Participants emphasised the importance of reflecting on decisions and being proactive in managing crises. Participants drew their motivation from personal visions, encouragement, faith in God and the desire to succeed in their chosen careers.

No.	Theme	Summary
5	Sustainable social bonds	Participants noted the importance of honesty, transparency and directness in leadership to establish trust and to prevent communication gaps. Teamwork, passion and a healthy environment were highlighted as essential factors for optimal performance and goal attainment. Participants stressed the importance of being sociable, flexible and offering incentives to motivate employees. Overall, a strong team bond can help to overcome obstacles and achieve success.
6	Higher education changes	Leaders identified the adoption of e-learning as a transformative change in education, emphasising the importance of vision and adaptability in using new technologies to enhance quality. They also noted the challenges of adjusting faculty contract terms and focusing on staff motivation and competition. Furthermore, leaders are tasked with ensuring that available majors align with the Kingdom's job market needs. The participants also highlighted the significance of public and private partnerships in fostering community participation in development processes. Such collaboration and investment were seen as vital roles for academic leaders in enhancing education quality and contributing to the country's development. Overall, these insights underscore the leaders' commitment to shaping higher education to better suit societal needs and national goals.

5.6 Summary of Cases

Results for theme of alignment and duties of academic leadership to achieve Vision 2030. In University A, the participants emphasised the importance of aligning higher education institutions with the government's vision, operating within regulations, setting ambitious objectives and effective planning for achieving the government's objectives. At University B, the identified needs of the university were: financial and infrastructure support, support for university independence, clear instructions, internal reform and better outputs. At University C, the participants spoke about the impact of the vision on their roles as administrators and the need to adapt quickly to the transformational change. The goal of Saudi Vision 2030 is to have five universities ranked in the top 200 universities worldwide and this requires a clear responsibility for each constituent unit to align with Vision 2030.

Results for theme of stress coping strategies, at University A, the changes often had a foundation to build upon so it was not possible to start from the beginning but to start from where others had finished. This reinforced the understanding among the leaders in the college that this orientation was a positive and established trend. University B engaged in religious activities, such as prayer or reading the Quran, to reduce stress. The emphasis at University C was on positive attitudes and behaviours that could lead to better results for departments, faculties and the university.

Results for theme of sustainable social bonds, among the members of University A, a clear line of communication between the people in the workplace helped them to be on the same page and to develop a strong bond. Patience was another virtue that should be cultivated to sustain bonds within the workplace team. Patience and maturity overcome the unproductive habits and attitudes that were shown by colleagues. University B stated that teamwork was very important for achieving optimal performance and working with passion created a positive atmosphere to develop positive bonds among members. University C stated the importance of being sociable to make a team functional.

Results for theme of self-leadership capabilities in higher education. University A emphasised the importance of an individual being self-motivated enough to achieve desired goals. University B's self-leadership reflected a decision that generally depended on how much experience one had before a decision was made. At University C, it was stated that as a leader or when in charge of a team or a member of a team, leaders must specify certain goals for each team member because these goals are translated into projects and tasks.

Results for theme of higher education changes, University A stated that online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic was completely new and sudden and this required managing it as quickly as possible as well as all its requirements, such as preparing teachers for this task, rearranging timetables and checking the network. University B stated that lecturers and students not only followed the changes but also were actively involved in building and evaluating the changes that occurred. University C stated that there was a huge challenge and a part of this challenge was the privatisation of universities and the reliance on their resource.

5.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings from three cases studies that explored the presence of resilient leadership among leaders in the Saudi higher education sector for achieving transformative strategic visions for the country, specifically, Vision 2030. The data were collected via interviews with 18 participants from three Saudi universities. The study used thematic analysis as the method for data analysis, which involved breaking down qualitative data into smaller components and categorising them according to themes or patterns. The chapter provided an overview of the key themes and patterns that emerged from the analysis in addition to relevant quotes and examples. Each case study started with a discussion of the background of the case, followed by an analysis of the themes and a summary. The outcome of each case was then discussed. The next chapter discusses the findings from the three case studies, which discusses these findings in terms of the literature.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on the revelations that emerged from the findings of the three case study universities in Saudi Arabia. The findings from the interviews with leaders in the universities that took part in this study are contextualised through a critical discussion of information from the relevant literature. Empirical findings are abstracted and linked to the theoretical discussions to produce clear arguments. The purpose of this analytical approach to the discussion is to provide a clearer understanding of the meaning of the findings for the research questions and for the theoretical and empirical knowledge that has been advanced by other scholars, who have previously studied the concepts in question. Subsequently, a framework for resilient leadership was developed using the findings from the leaders in the higher education sector in KSA. The Saudi higher education leadership is influenced by Saudi Arabia's cultural values; therefore, this study furthers the understanding of resilient leadership within the Saudi higher education culture and context. Furthermore, the study explores the presence of resilient leadership among Saudi higher education leaders for achieving the Saudi government's Vision 2030.

6.2 Resilient Leadership in Context of Saudi Arabia's Higher Education

6.2.1 Alignment and Duties of Academic Leadership to Achieve Vision 2030.

This topic focuses on how institutions of higher education must be aligned with the overarching vision of the Saudi government as well as the necessary education improvements that are outlined in the Vision 2030 statement. The substance of this theme covers ideas such as following the rules set out by Vision 2030. The results showed that it was crucial to set goals for each department and that these were in line with the university's aims to realise Vision 2030, as was articulated by Participant 5 from Case A about the change in the design of the college objectives. This finding is consistent with those from other studies, such as that by Mohamed (2018), who stated that the importance of leadership is in strategically aligning university goals with those articulated in Vision 2030. More recently, Alshathri (2020)

claimed that higher education would be more progressive and competitive by ensuring congruence between institutional goals and national priorities. Participants 2 and 5 at University C concluded that the promulgation of Vision 2030 had a profound and widespread effect on leaders in all sectors, necessitating quick adaptation, adjustment and the devising of new strategies.

This revolutionary shift required university leaders to adapt swiftly and although Vision 2030 presents a formidable challenge, there is much more to come. Leaders at the national, ministry, university and college levels anticipated some of these challenges, which helped to mitigate their impact (P2 and P5 in Case C). This supports the findings that have been published in other studies, which suggest that universities must be flexible to align their objectives with the government's objectives (Alharbi, 2016; Alkhayyal, et al., 2019; Allmnakrah & Evers, 2020). It is clear that the quality of the leadership in Saudi Arabia's higher education sector is directly tied to the success of Vision 2030 despite the probable emergence of temporary setbacks. Therefore, building resilience among leaders in higher education institutions is crucial not only for effectively implementing the reforms that are required for Vision 2030 but also for ensuring their successful achievement. This is consistent with the findings of other studies that have highlighted the need for resilient leadership in organisations that encounter demands for significant change and the uncertainty that accompanies it (Deloitte, 2020; Lane et al., 2013; Sutcliffe et al., 2016). Participants in this study demonstrated resilient leadership as they swiftly adapted their institutions' goals to align with Vision 2030. For instance, Participant 5 from University A stated that the university's goals are in alignment with the Kingdom's goals and that he is responsible for making sure the college's goals are in alignment with both. Similarly, P2 from University B quickly adjusted the college's goals with Vision 2030. Many participants throughout the study echoed these findings (P1, P4 and P6 in Case B). Allison (2012), Arond-Thomas (2004), and Ben-Shahar (2020), assert that resilient leaders recover quickly, maintain focus on their organisation's ultimate goals, and effectively handle setbacks such as resistance to change or unexpected challenges that may occur during transformative processes. This is further supported by Foerster and Duchek (2017), who posited that resilient leaders recognise that continuously changing mechanisms exist for organisations and have the ability to adapt quickly to these complex and dynamic environments.

The study findings showed the proactive efforts of universities in Saudi Arabia to update their courses and leadership practices in alignment with international standards to support the country's Vision 2030. Participant 3 from Case C emphasised the significance of having five universities ranked among the world's best, particularly highlighting the need for improved quality and quantity of scientific research publications to enhance the university's international classification and rank, in accordance with government policies. Vision 2030 aims to have five universities ranked among the top 200 in international rankings by 2030 (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016). To navigate these transformations effectively, leaders (P3 from Case C and P1 and P5 from Case B) adopted strategic planning, developed a clear vision and goals, and fostered loyalty towards the action plan through effective communication. According to Arond-Thomas (2004), resilient leaders guide their actions by having a clear vision and purpose, effectively communicating this vision to inspire their teams to remain focused and motivated during challenging times. Moreover, researchers like Moe (2012), Archibald and Munn-Venn (2008), and Ungar et al. (2021) have argued that resilient leaders with a clear vision can effectively lead an organisation through challenges and setbacks and retain a focus on the desired goals.

According to this study's findings, university leaders demonstrate an understanding of their responsibilities and acknowledge the current circumstances considering the government's Vision 2030 plan. Some participants, such as Participant 2 from Case A and Participant 5 from Case B, stated that achieving the ambitious objectives outlined in Vision 2030 requires significant financial and infrastructural backing from the Ministry. These participants underscored the critical nature of external resources in executing such transformative strategies. This is consistent with the findings of Aburizaizah (2022), who highlighted the challenges faced by Saudi institutions because of a lack of resources and support. Simultaneously, they demonstrated their capacity as leaders by highlighting their ability to adapt and adjust their strategic plans according to the shifting environment. Participants 3 and 5 from Case B embodied this resilience, exhibiting a readiness to navigate challenges and realign strategies in response to environmental shifts, aiming to maintain alignment with Vision 2030. According to Lane et al. (2013), resilient leaders can overcome challenges and achieve goals by maintaining a positive mindset and fostering innovation and creativity to find new solutions to challenges. Resilient leadership, which is the most effective approach

in turbulent, uncertain and challenging times (Holmberg, et al., 2016; Southwick et al., 2017), involves the ability of a resilient leader to identify risks and to chart a critical path towards the delivery of objectives and the completion of a mission. For example, Participant 6 from Case B stated that his college's goals were ambitious, in line with the university's equally ambitious goals. Considering the study's findings, building characteristics of resilience among leaders can potentially help higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia to implement reforms and to effectively handle current and future challenges in the long term.

6.2.2 Coping with Stress

Saudi universities have been undergoing a period of intense policy transformation to meet the goals of Vision 2030, resulting in various alterations to the academic system that have put significant stress on leaders. Understanding how participants coped with this situation is crucial for ensuring the successful implementation of these changes. Saudi Arabia's higher education system is deeply rooted in cultural values, and it is essential to explore leadership practices within this cultural lens (Nurunnabi, 2017). This section explores how the participants from the three universities managed the stress caused by changes in the academic system to maintain productivity throughout the workplace.

The study's findings reveal that the leaders in the three case study universities employed various methods to manage the stress caused by the changes demanded by Vision 2030. These leaders enhanced their resilience by implementing coping mechanisms. Strategies included maintaining open communication with colleagues, engaging in physical activities, such as sports, spending time with loved ones, practising their religion and taking well-timed breaks. For example, Participant 3 in Case C emphasised the importance of honest communication and seeking advice from a trusted individual to reduce pressure. The statement agrees with other studies, such as those by Yann (2018), De Wit and Altbach (2022) and Longstaff and Yang (2008), who reported that open and honest communication is essential for successful leadership and team collaboration because it assists in the development of trust and promotes a well-functioning work environment. It is much easier for leaders to address concerns, meet or exceed expectations and ensure that all team members have a firm understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities when

communication is honest and meaningful (Garcia et al., 2014; Tuan, 2022). Participant 6 in Case B highlighted the benefits of regular team meetings to alleviate sources of pressure and dissatisfaction. This relates to the findings of Bordia et al. (2014) and Rogelberg et al. (2014), who stated that communication is more effective when regular team meetings are held. This allows team members to exchange information, voice concerns and clarify any misunderstandings.

However, Participant 4 in Case B noted that sports, such as walking, helped them to refresh their mind during work-related pressures. Pacewicz et al. (2022) argued that walking is essential to reduce the overload of stress and to improve health. Breen (2017) discussed that resilient leaders perform several activities to release stress and walking with a partner or close friends is one such example. Stults-Kolehmainen and Sinha (2014) highlighted the stress-buffering effects of exercise. In addition, Participant 3 in Case A reported that spending time with family and friends or changing his workspace environment helped to alleviate stress. This finding is consistent with Berdejo-Espinola et al.'s (2021) recommendation to spend time in nature as a potential remedy for reducing stress or worries. In their work, Labrague & De los Santos (2020) emphasised the importance of reducing pressure for building resilience through various methods, such as seeking social support.

Participant 1 in Case C coped with stress through prayer, which has been linked to physical and psychological health benefits. Research on South Asian American Muslims by Tirodkar et al. (2011) and Taufik et al. (2022) found that engaging in regular prayer can increase one's ability to adapt and accept during times of stress and adversity. Finally, Participant 6 in Case B managed stress by recognising his mental state and taking a break from work or avoiding holding meetings when he felt overwhelmed. According to Perry et al. (2022) and Sonnentag and Schiffner (2019), taking a break or taking time off from work provides benefits such as an environment that has a lower level of stress and better productivity. It is noted that leaders manage stress because of changes in the education sector of the KSA by adhering to several vital strategies: open communication, meetings and physical exercises, such as walking, practising prayers, spending time with family and colleagues and taking a break from work.

Further, the study's findings indicate that a positive mindset practices was a prevalent characteristic among the participants from the three universities. Participants strongly noted the importance of flexibility and adaptability, welcoming changes and maintaining a positive attitude towards new plans, viewing them as opportunities for growth. For instance, Participant 6 from Case A accepted and welcomed changes, which enabled them to adapt quickly to new situations. Participant 6 commented, 'The changes are positive and I benefited from them'. The findings of this study are consistent with prior studies that have highlighted the importance of a positive mindset and adaptive coping strategies during times of change and stress (Baykal, 2018; Froman, 2010; Sutcliffe, Vogus & Dane, 2016; Tuan, 2022.). Leaders who exhibit positive attitudes and resilient behaviours are more likely to inspire confidence and motivation in their teams and to effectively manage stressors. In addition, the study participants' emphasis on viewing changes as opportunities for growth aligns with the concept of a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006), which suggests that individuals who believe in their ability to learn and evolve from challenges are more adaptable and resilient. Overall, the study underscores the importance of cultivating a positive mindset and adaptive coping strategies for leaders and organisations that face change and various pressures.

The study results showed that although some leaders welcomed the introduced changes, others expressed concerns about the lack of clarity of the goals for their employees, insufficient employee involvement in the change process, lack of self-confidence and ineffective communication, which all contributed to increased stress among certain participants. Specifically, Participant 3 from Case A reported that some employees were anxious and fearful about the changes because they did not fully understand the effects on their work, resulting in increased stress or uncertainty. This is consistent with research by Shirley, Hargreaves & Washington-Wangia (2020), Bordia et al. (2014) and Terry and Callan (1997), which indicates that uncertainty about the impact of organisational change can lead to rising levels of stress and anxiety. Participant 5 from Case A expressed concerns about the work processes that were associated with implementing the changes and the pursuit of government goals, which led to increased levels of stress. According to a study by Loveday (2021), anxiety in management and negative attitudes and actions can prevent academic institutions from reaching their goals. However, PsyCap, including hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy, has been recognised as a valuable resource to help individuals to

cope with uncertainty and to reduce perceived stress, as has been noted in other studies (Abbas & Raja, 2015; Darvishmotevali & Ali, 2020; Luthans et al., 2005; Maykrantz et al., 2021; Youssef & Luthans, 2015). Thus, incorporating such PsyCap creates a spirit of resilience that positively and significantly affects the productivity of leaders in higher education in Saudi Arabia in achieving Vision 2030, as was supported by Masten and Reed (2002). Therefore, the resilient leadership that was exhibited by the various university leaders plays a crucial part in guiding the nation towards the realisation of Vision 2030 because they will be able to maintain their energy level under pressure, deal with disruptive shifts and adapt.

6.2.3 Sustainable Social Bonds

In terms of this theme, the results showed that University A prioritised the formation of relationships to strengthen the university's resilient leadership characteristics and procedures, which are required to meet Vision 2030 and to cultivate positive relationships among members. The study highlights the crucial role that teamwork plays in managing high-pressure situations. Participants 1 and 5 in Case A demonstrated that team members stepping in to assist could make a significant difference to the completion of a task when the pressure becomes overwhelming for a single individual. This collaborative approach not only helps alleviate the burden on one person but also fosters a supportive and efficient work environment, ultimately contributing to the team's overall success. For example, Salas et al. (2005), Burke et al. (2006) and Salas-Vallina et al. (2022) highlighted that effective teamwork improves performance outcomes and assists individuals to cope with stress. According to a study by Schmutz et al. (2019), adaptive coordination and team communication can lead to improved performance and stress management. Similarly, University B prioritised the maintenance of interpersonal harmony to protect the efficiency of the organisation. Regular meetings were held to listen to what others had to say, to receive members' perspectives and to observe disagreements to devise potential resolutions. The favourable association was preserved by continuing in this manner (P2 and P4 in Case B). This is supported by evidence from Goertzen and Whitaker (2015). Resilient leadership promotes healthier teams that flourish and operate with nimbleness and adaptability, promoting innovation and creativity because of the low levels of anxiety that are borne from

trust in the existing bonds, specifically, in the case of higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia.

As was indicated in the findings, University C concentrated on the feelings or actions that leaders employed to uphold the goals of their faculty or department and to align with the government's economic goals (according to P2 and P3 in Case C). The motivation to progress and achieve a vision that is consistent with the Kingdom's vision comes from a personal vision. A crucial component of handling this problem effectively and with focus was helping one another and fostering strong communication among members (P2 and P3 in Case C). As was demonstrated in the literature review, Al-Omara et al. (2019) asserted that effective leadership is evident in the influencing and guiding of the activities of team members to achieve goals. Consequently, if leaders in the higher education sector of Saudi Arabia are to thrive in these conditions and guide their organisations well during these uncertain times, there is a need for a new, more effective way of leading to achieve Vision 2030. Therefore, using the demonstrated resilient leadership practices (i.e. frequent meetings for bonding, and communication), leaders can navigate the dynamic system of the institution. Hence, having resilient leaders can help organisations to achieve their goals by fostering team spirit, increasing motivation and positive attitudes and fostering healthy competition.

6.2.4 Self-Leadership Capabilities

The goals that are outlined in the Saudi higher education Vision 2030 can be accomplished with the help of resilient leaders who demonstrated certain practices. These characteristics equip leaders to successfully navigate challenges and uncertainties while cultivating a flourishing higher education sector. University A's P3 and P5 hinted that a person's future orientation was closely tied to their personal vision, as well as individual preferences, reward structures and levels of initiative. The study found that leaders in Saudi higher education recognised the importance of self-motivation in achieving goals and were committed to working hard to achieve them (P3 and P5 in Case A). According to Luthans and Youssef (2007) and Southwick et al. (2017), resilient leaders possess a sense of purpose or mission, self-motivation and the ability to persist in the face of obstacles. Masten and Reed (2002) emphasised the importance of having a clear vision and being able to adapt to changing

circumstances to promote resilience. Furthermore, self-reflection, which is the process of examining and analysing one's thoughts, feelings and actions to gain insight and improve personal growth, has been identified as a characteristic of resilient leadership and has been used in leadership training (Schedlitzki, 2019; Travers & Locke, 2015; Wu & Crocco, 2019). For example, self-reflection can help individuals to examine their preconceived notions and internalised beliefs about leadership and promote resilience. Further, it can facilitate two-way communication and the discovery of principles and ideologies among education leaders (Branson, 2007; King & Rothstein, 2010). Therefore, fostering a culture of self-reflection in Saudi Arabia's higher education and professional settings can promote resilient leadership and help leaders to develop a better understanding of themselves and their leadership styles.

According to King and Rothstein (2010), El-Annan (2013) and Kohlrierser (2014), self-leadership empowers people to have a vision, be creative and be proactive. Participant 3 provided a similar responses indicating that self-leaders can foster an environment that is conducive to growth and innovation because they have a profound understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and their impact on those around them. According to Drucker (2008), to be effective, leaders need to have a strong sense of self-efficacy and ability to capitalise on their strengths and work to improve their weaknesses. Moreover, the findings of this study showed that leaders in Saudi higher education were motivated to achieve the desired goals through their own passion and patriotism, effective planning and being decisive and flexible (P3 and P1 in Case A and P4 in Case B). They valued cooperation, consultation and task delegation to ensure efficiency in their teams and were proactive in anticipating and resolving any challenges that might arise (P1, P2 and P5 in Case B and P2 and P5 in Case C). According to Shelton et al. (2022), Luthans and Youssef (2007), Masten and Reed (2002), Wang et al. (2017), Eliot (2020) and Everly et al.(2013), resilient leaders prioritise adaptability and proactive problem-solving to overcome obstacles. In addition, they value cooperation, consultation and task delegation, which aligns with the importance of building strong relationships and empowering team members (Beardslee, 1989; Tau et al., 2018). In conclusion, cultivating resilient leadership practices, such as those identified in this study, may enhance the success of Saudi Arabia's higher education Vision 2030 by promoting innovation, collaboration and the effective navigation of challenges.

6.2.5 Higher Education Changes

To achieve improvements in higher education, the focus was on enhancing the quality of education, promoting research and innovation and fostering a collaborative learning environment. Participants 4 and 6 stated that the senior leadership of University A recognised the need for implementing changes to fulfil Vision 2030. Initially, University A agreed that many changes in its environment had led to the development of a new operational model. The leadership of University A aimed to build a world-class institution that contributed to the knowledge-based economy and helped to fulfil the aspirations of Vision 2030. Therefore, it prioritised these key areas to achieve that goal. These changes included leadership shifts, contract work and privatisation, which have become widespread in this new system (as was asserted by Participants 4 and 6 in Case A).

The changing landscape of higher education is being reshaped by significant shifts in leadership, an increase in the use of contract workers and an emphasis on privatisation. Studies, such as one by Simkins (2012), highlighted the importance of effective succession planning and the impact of leadership changes on an institution's stability. In addition, research by Altbach at al. (2019) investigated the prevalence of contract work in the academic sector and its implications for job security, academic freedom and quality of work. Recently, Marginson (2020) explored privatisation trends in higher education, explaining the increased reliance on private sector funding, market competition and their ramifications for access, equity and the quality of education. These studies underscore the complex challenges that universities face in adapting to the changing landscape of higher education and the importance of thoughtful approaches to maintain excellence and sustainability. According to Gu and Day (2013) and Shirley et al. (2020), resilience is an essential trait for education leaders and contributes to positive transformation at universities. Leadership capacity, as was highlighted by Simon and Gibson (2019), also plays a crucial role in the development of education.

However, Participants 2 and 5 demonstrated a significant connection between resilient leadership and increased organisational performance at University C. This finding aligns with what has been previously documented about the topic. For example, Harms et al. (2018),

Luthans et al. (2006) and O'Grady et al. (2021) highlighted the positive impact that resilient leadership has on an organisation's performance and the wellbeing of its employees. Sutcliffe et al. (2016) research highlighted the significance of resilient leadership in cultivating a positive work environment. This, in turn, supports innovative capabilities, adaptability and overall performance. A study by Day (2014) investigated the relationship between resilience, leadership and organisational outcomes. The findings of this study suggest that resilience can improve leaders' decision-making and problem-solving capabilities, which, ultimately, results in improved organisational performance. In conclusion, the findings from the experiences of Participants 2 and 5 lend credence to the body of prior research on resilient leadership and its effect on the functioning of organisations. Their findings help to explain the significance of resiliency in leadership and its role in the overall success and expansion of organisations, such as University C. The participants in in this study reported that there had been shifts in the leadership of academic departments while the institution worked towards achieving Vision 2030. In the beginning, all participants agreed that the multiple changes had resulted in the establishment of a new education structure. Adjustments to leadership procedures, employment through contract work and privatisation became the new norm. In addition to these changes, e-learning was incorporated.

Participants P4 and P5 argued that University B must implement novel strategies to ensure that higher education is relevant to the outside world, including society and science. Resilient leadership is critical in determining such strategies and in raising educational standards. The viewpoints of Participants P4 and P5 emphasise the significance of innovation at University B to ensure the continued applicability of novel ideas in higher education given the changes in society and science. Several studies have supported this view. Kezar and Eckel (2002) highlighted the need for higher education institutions to adapt and innovate in response to changing external circumstances, especially those related to workforce requirements and societal needs. Goddard et al. (2016) investigated the role of universities in developing innovation ecosystems that foster collaboration and reflect societal and scientific norms over time. Resilient leaders can better navigate obstacles and uncertainties, propelling their organisations towards success. Johnson et al. (2016) highlighted the significant role that leadership plays in fostering innovation within higher educational establishments. Indeed, such innovation in education contributes to achieving the Vision 2030 objective of

establishing a knowledge-based economy and enhancing global competitiveness (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016).

Resilient leadership creates an environment that nurtures creativity and experimentation, enabling institutions to develop innovative solutions that address societal and scientific challenges. University B should be continuously open to new ideas and developments to keep pace with the rapidly evolving world. The resilient leadership approach is more suitable in situations in which major transformation in organisational strategic objectives is desired (Dartey-Baah, 2015; Lombardi, et al., 2021; Nishikawa, 2006; O'Leary, 1998; Peterson, et al., 2008) and innovation resilience is the ability of an organisation to cope with the uncertainties that are associated with its innovative activities by integrating stability and adaptability (Lv et al., 2018). The observations made by Participants P4 and P5 coincide with the existing research on the importance of innovation in higher education to ensure its continued relevance to society and science. Therefore, University B can make meaningful contributions to expanding and developing knowledge even in the face of a shifting global landscape by accepting change and encouraging innovation through resilient leaders.

6.3 Development of Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework depicted in Figure 7.1 is a summation of the findings outlined in the preceding subsections, derived from the analysis of three case study universities in Saudi Arabia. This framework, embodying a distinctive blend of Saudi cultural values that inform leadership practices, was developed through empirical findings obtained from leaders in Saudi universities, followed by a discussion with the literature reviewed in previous sections of this chapter. Reflecting the unique blend of Saudi cultural values, this framework captures the essence of resilient leadership as influenced by Saudi Arabia's specific socio-cultural dynamics. The researcher proposes a conceptual framework that consolidates four main subconstructs: self-leadership capabilities, sustainable social bonds, stress coping strategies, and positive mindset practices that are required for resilient leadership. This framework aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of resilient leadership within the specific context of Saudi Arabia's higher education system. The first characteristic is self-leadership capabilities. Self-leadership capabilities are defined as a set of practices that empower leaders

to purposefully direct their actions, feelings, and thoughts towards achieving organisational objectives. The study found that leaders are resilient by their ability to develop and adapt their vision and missions in line with university objectives, swiftly formulate strategies, and recover quickly from setbacks. Self-leadership capabilities such as having a sense of purpose, displaying self-motivation, practising self-reflection, expressing passion and patriotism, maintaining self-efficacy, solving problems effectively, and planning efficiently are integral to resilience. Leaders who demonstrate these capabilities display a greater degree of resilience and are better positioned to navigate changes, foster adaptability, and achieve strategic goals such as those outlined in Vision 2030.
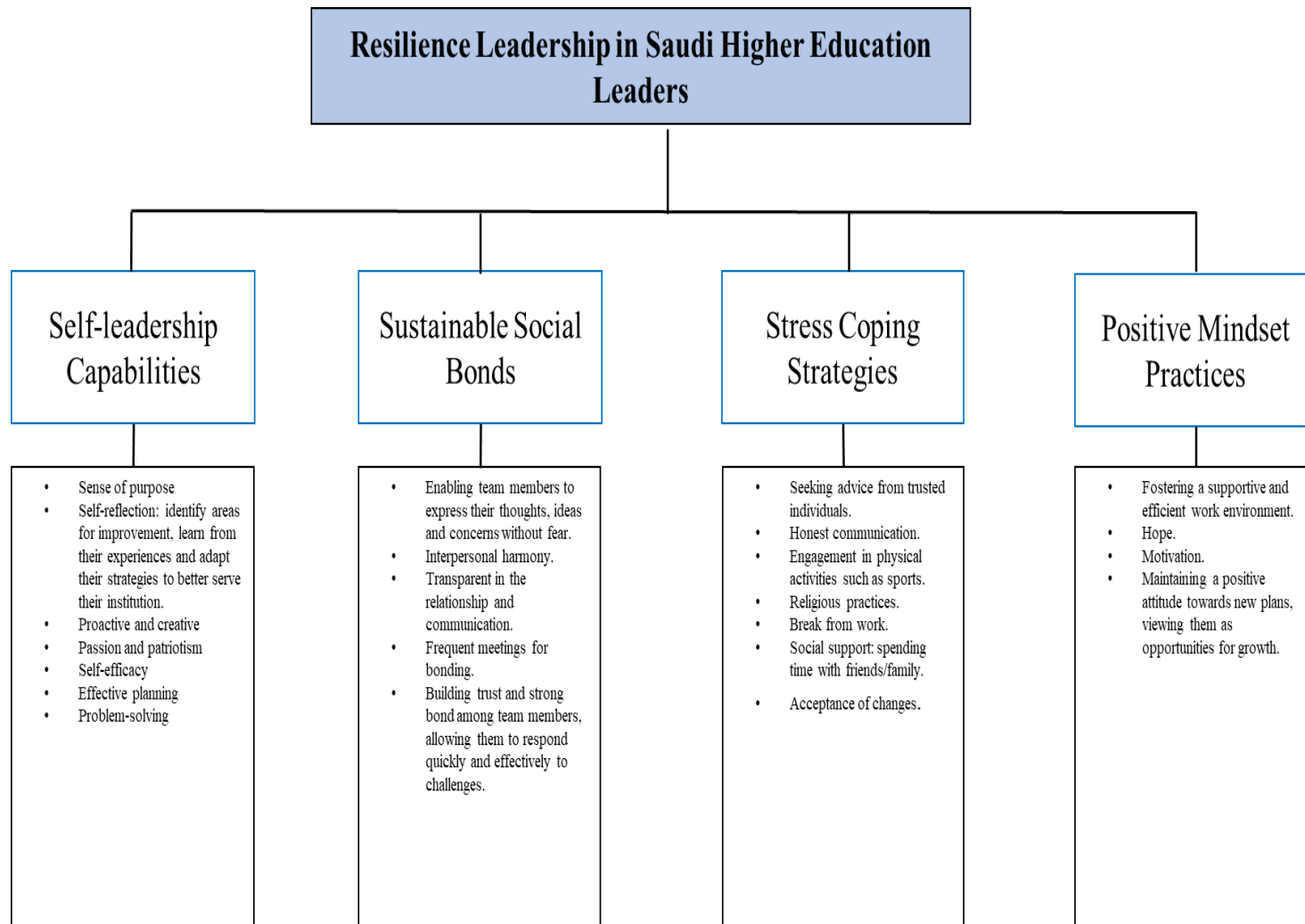
Figure 6.1: Conceptual Framework using Study's Higher Education Leadership Findings (Source: Author)

The second subconstruct that contributes to the resilient leadership framework in the Saudi higher education sector is sustainable social bonds. This term refers to the deliberate efforts of leaders to build and nurture strong, enduring relationships within their teams, a crucial aspect that enhances the resiliency of their leadership. Sustainable bonds, such as creating an environment where team members can freely express their thoughts, ideas, and concerns, promoting interpersonal harmony, fostering transparency in relationships and communication and holding frequent meetings for bonding, are essential for building trust and strong bonds among team members. This, in turn, enables team members to respond quickly and effectively to challenges, making teamwork a vital aspect of resilient leadership in high-pressure situations. In addition, open and transparent communication among team members and regular meetings contribute to resilient leadership. In this way, leaders can encourage collaboration and discuss problems more efficiently, using ample solutions to achieve success for the university. Therefore, sustainable social bonds play a significant role in enhancing leadership resilience to manage changes, contributing immensely to achieving the university's vision

The third component within the resilient leadership framework is stress coping strategies. In the context of this study, stress coping strategies are defined as adaptive measures leaders use to manage the pressures and challenges they encounter, particularly in dynamic environments such as the higher education sector in the KSA. The findings of the study reveal that resilient leadership necessitates various coping strategies to relieve tensions and regain positive energy. These strategies include, seeking advice from a trusted individual, honest communication, and engagement in physical activities, such as sports, religious practices, taking breaks and team meetings, among others. In addition, social support, such as spending time with friends and family, is crucial for coping with stress. Accepting changes is another important element of coping with stress because leaders who possess adaptive coping strategies and a positive mindset are better equipped to manage stressors and to lead their team towards success. By implementing these strategies, leaders in the higher education sector of the KSA can develop resilient leadership and cope with the pressures of change to achieve the goals of Vision 2030.

The final dimension that contributes to resilient leadership is positive mindset practices. Within the scope of this study, positive mindset practices are defined as the sustained efforts of leaders to nurture optimism, hope, adaptability, and a growth mindset that

transforms setbacks and obstacles into opportunities for learning, adaptation, and perseverance. In the context of the Saudi higher education sector, the study found that leaders with a positive mindset are better equipped to manage uncertainty and challenges, which creates a healthy environment for staff and helps to develop their skills. Moreover, leaders empower their teams, instilling hope and motivation, which can assist the higher education sector in achieving Vision 2030. These leaders view new plans and changes with positivity, seeing them as opportunities for growth. This outlook can cultivate a culture of growth mindset, which encourages continuous learning and development. Overall, cultivating a positive mindset is essential for resilient leadership in the Saudi higher education sector to effectively adapt to the changes and achieve the university's objectives. All these lead to resilient leadership and improvement of the higher education sector in alignment with Vision 2030. Thus, in the context of the Saudi higher education sector, this study adds to the body of knowledge by highlighting these essential characteristics and behaviours that are important for resilient leadership to achieve Vision 2030.

6.4 Chapter Summary

This study explored resilient leadership in Saudi Arabian higher education leaders and its relevance to achieving Vision 2030, identifying factors that contribute to its success in preparing universities to meet the government's expectations. Self-leadership capabilities, sustainable social bonds, methods for coping with stress, maintaining positive mindset practices, and the traits of resilient leadership are all closely linked to Vision 2030. The findings are consistent with the literature, which has shown evidence that resilient leadership withstands adversity; so, it is an essential component for the success of Saudi universities in achieving the objectives of Vision 2030. Universities navigate the challenges and uncertainties that come with the rapidly changing landscape of higher education because of this style of leadership, which focuses on adaptability, empowerment and long-term success. This should be understood in the context of Saudi universities in which the promotion of cutting-edge research, adoption of new teaching methods and encouragement of collaboration across disciplines are now highly sought.

The findings show that leaders might face challenges when confronting the changes that have occurred because of Vision 2030. This requires resiliency among university leaders to adapt to the changes in accordance with Vision 2030. In the presence of resilient

leaders, organisations can easily manage the changes and guarantee a successful drive towards Vision 2030. Leaders in universities that are in the stage of transitioning towards the 2030 goal are exposed to a significant amount of stress. The stress mainly arises because of improper communication, a lack of self-confidence and insufficient skills and expertise that affect the performance of the leader. However, the study identifies strategies for leaders to cope with stress by adopting strategies, such as open communication, physical exercise, good times spent with close ones, including family and friends, religious practices and breaks from work. For the resilient leaders in the universities of the KSA, it is important to build relationships between teams by conducting meetings to increase transparency and to foster a culture of collaboration that helps institutions to achieve their goals. The study shows that resilient leadership that is linked to Vision 2030 depends on four qualities, including self-leadership, sustainable bonds, managing stress and maintaining a positive mindset. The education institutions in the KSA are aware of the importance of self-leadership for Vision 2030, because the leadership is visionary, creative and proactive. The study contends that leaders in the higher education sector of the KSA need to act genuinely towards Vision 2030 through self-reflection and being aware of leadership aims, strengths and values. Moreover, the education sector of the KSA needs to adopt an innovation strategy in accordance with Vision 2030 to improve education quality.

Resilient leaders ensure that universities remain adaptable and responsive to pressures from the outside world by fostering a culture of adaptability and persistence. This places universities in a position to achieve the goals that are outlined in Vision 2030. Therefore, resilient leaders can increase the capacity of Saudi universities to contribute to the nation's development by forging strategic partnerships with international institutions, partner companies and government agencies. Finally, to realise the goals of Vision 2030 in education, it is necessary to encourage collaboration and coordination among the various stakeholders. The present study demonstrates that resilient leadership, and its emphasis on adaptability, empowerment and long-term success when facing challenges and uncertainties, is well suited to Saudi universities that are working towards meeting Vision 2030. This is because it helps to cultivate a culture of adaptability and flexibility, enabling organisations to welcome change and pursue innovation. Given the complex challenges that are faced by higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia, resilient leadership is best suited to meet the challenges and uncertainties that are facing these

institutions. This study concludes in the next chapter, which provides a summary of the current thesis as well as practical and theoretical implications, limitations and critical reflections for future studies to consider when researching this topic.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter provides an overview of the study and its findings as well as the theoretical and practical implications of resilient leadership in the context of Saudi higher education. Drawing on the study's findings, this chapter offers recommendations to guide leaders in effectively implementing resilient leadership practices in their institutions. In addition, the study points out its limitations and provides suggestions for future research in relevant areas to further expand the understanding of resilient leadership in higher education leadership.

7.2 Overview of Study and Findings

The aim of this study was to explore the presence of resilient leadership among leaders in the Saudi higher education sector and its relevance to achieving the Saudi government's Vision 2030 economic plan. Saudi higher education plays a crucial role in developing a skilled and knowledgeable workforce that is capable of driving the country's economic and social progress. The ambitious Vision 2030 blueprint seeks to transform Saudi Arabia into a knowledge-based economy by promoting innovation, entrepreneurship and scientific research. To achieve this, significant investment in higher education is required to create a workforce that can take up the new job and career opportunities.

However, it has been observed that leaders in Saudi Arabia's higher education lack the necessary leadership skills and practices to promote creativity, innovation and collaboration, hindering the effectiveness of their institutions to realise Vision 2030 (Alalshaikh, 2017; Gonaim, 2019; Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). The importance of resilient leadership has emerged as a key approach to navigating the uncertainty that accompanies change given that Saudi Arabia faces unprecedented challenges in achieving its national strategy. There is currently a dearth of research on the presence of resilient leadership in higher education, specifically, in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, no prior studies have linked the resilient leadership of those in charge of Saudi universities to Vision 2030. Consequently, this study attempted to address the gaps in the knowledge about resilient leadership and its practices in Saudi higher education leaders. The study aimed to answer the following questions:

Key Research Question

Is resilient leadership present and relevant in Saudi higher education leaders to achieve Vision 2030?

Sub-Question

How do the traits, behaviours and skills of resilient leadership link to the achievement of Saudi Vision 2030?

To answer these questions, this study employed a qualitative study that adopted the case study approach, using the participation of 18 leaders, including deans and heads of departments, from three public universities in Saudi Arabia. These participants were important figures in the higher education sector, contributing to the overall achievement of Vision 2030 by shaping the strategic directions of their institutions. Thematic analysis was used to examine the collected data and to explore participants' perspectives. The findings of this study, as they relate to the research questions, are discussed and summarised in the following paragraphs.

The study findings suggest that the presence of resilient leadership is a crucial factor in Saudi higher education leaders' efforts to achieve the objectives of Vision 2030. The implementation of Vision 2030 presents significant challenges for higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia, which requires swift adaptation, adjustment and the development of new strategies by university leaders. Resilient leadership, defined by adaptability, the handling of uncertainty that accompanies change and the ability to effectively respond to challenges, is essential for leaders as they strive to improve the quality of higher education and elevate the international rankings of public universities so that they have an international reputation. In the Saudi university system, leaders are responsible for accomplishing the goals that are set by the government and directing individuals in an appropriate manner towards the implementation of their tasks and functions, offering solutions to various problems and challenges, making sound decisions and cultivating a positive and supportive atmosphere. Leaders in this system have demonstrated resilience by setting clear objectives and adapting their skills according to what each university seeks to achieve. This involves aligning with Vision 2030 and creating an environment that fosters growth, innovation and excellence in higher education.

In terms of the sub-research question, the study aimed to identify the characteristics, behaviours and skills of resilient leadership that are linked to achieving Vision 2030. Here, the development of resilient leadership has become essential in the higher education system of Saudi Arabia, compelling universities to overcome any deficiencies or weaknesses in their leadership and raise the quality of education. With this in mind, the leaders of Saudi universities are enriched with several key characteristics and skills that are essential for indicating resilience, which can become a benchmark for other sectoral leaders in Saudi Arabia. The key characteristics and skills that are required for resilient leadership were identified in this study through interviewees and they are as follows: (1) self-leadership capabilities: sense of purpose, self-reflection, proactivity, creativity, passion, patriotism, ambition, self-efficacy, effective planning, problem-solving and adaptability, (2) sustainable social bonds: removing fear by encouraging team members to express their thoughts and ideas, interpersonal harmony, productive relationships, transparent communication and frequent meetings that encourage the development of trust and bonding among personnel, (3) stress coping strategies: advice-seeking from trusted individuals, honest communication, engagement in physical activities, religious practices, social support and acceptance of challenges and (4) positive mindset practices: efficient and supportive working environment in which hope, motivation, positive attitudes and new plans are treated as an opportunity for growth. By adhering to these vital traits of resilience, the leaders of Saudi Arabia's higher education sector can effectively manage the uncertainty that comes with change, foster a culture of innovation and excellence, and promote the well-being of themselves and their team members, thereby contributing to achieving Vision 2030.

7.3 Theoretical Implications

The theoretical implications of this study are significant. Specifically, the findings provide valuable insights into the role of resilient leadership in the Saudi higher education sector as it strives to achieve transformative strategic visions, such as Vision 2030. These insights can also be beneficial for other sectors that are aiming to thrive. This study has theoretical implications in several ways. First, this study has unique theoretical implications by focusing on Saudi higher education and extending the literature by exploring resilient leadership in Saudi Arabia. It further contributes by considering the cultural milieu of Saudi Arabia and how it may interact with resilience leadership. The

interplay between cultural identity and resilient leadership in this context provides a unique perspective to the current understanding given the distinct cultural traits inherent in Saudi society, such as respect for tradition, religious values, and community orientations (Alfalih, 2014; Algarni & Male, 2015; Alhammadi, 2018; Alsuood & Youde, 2018). This adds to the existing literature on resilient leadership, which has primarily focused on other sectors, such as the healthcare sector (Kim & Windsor, 2015) and the military service (Mjelde et al., 2016), which goes beyond the limited scope offered in the literature.

Second, this study imparts theoretical implications concerning the crucial interplay between resilient leadership and the achievement of strategic visions, shedding light on the contemporary state of leadership within the Saudi higher education sector. It underscores the pivotal role of adaptable and resilient leadership in navigating the challenges and uncertainties inherent in achieving strategic educational objectives. This assertion is supported by scholarly contributions from Arond-Thomas (2004), Ledesma (2014), Moe (2012), Özmusul (2017), and Patterson et al. (2009), who collectively emphasise the instrumental role of leadership in realising strategic visions within organisations. Unique to this study is the establishment of a direct link between the realisation of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the application of resilient leadership practices in public universities. Through empirical evidence, this study demonstrates how leaders in Saudi Arabian universities exemplify resilience in their daily responsibilities, significantly influencing the quality of education and aligning it with the strategic imperatives of Vision 2030. Thus, the relationship between resilient leadership capabilities and their enhancement of educational quality in pursuit of Vision 2030 has been comprehensively explored and delineated in this study.

Third, this study deepens the understanding of resilient leadership by highlighting distinctive traits within the socio-cultural fabric of the Saudi Arabian higher education sector. These traits include surprising self-efficacy, a sense of purpose, proactive and creative thinking, effective planning, problem-solving, coping with stress, and positive thinking. These traits corroborate the skills outlined in the literature (Lane et al., 2013; Hamid & Ghazali, 2022; Patterson et al., 2009; Patterson & Kelleher, 2005; Vazir & Meher, 2010; Holmberg et al., 2016). However, this study uniquely contextualises these traits within the Saudi Arabian milieu. The emphasis on fostering interpersonal harmony

and utilising culturally resonant stress coping strategies, such as seeking advice from trusted individuals and engaging in religious practices like prayer and reading the holy Quran, delineates a culturally tailored approach to resilient leadership. Moreover, this study reveals how patriotism and passion guide leaders to effectively navigate changes and realise the objectives of Vision 2030, thereby adding a novel dimension to the concept of resilient leadership. Leaders in Saudi higher education exemplify these resilient traits distinctively, influenced by the country's socio-political and cultural context. This is evident in their preference for transparent communication, regular team meetings, and collaborative approaches, reflecting Gonaim et al.'s (2016) study, which highlights the collective culture of Saudi Arabia, emphasising the predominance of group interests over individual ones in shaping higher education leadership practices. Consequently, the capacity of leaders to adapt strategies and sustain resilience amidst change, as observed in this study, offers an insightful perspective on resilient leadership, enhancing its relevance and applicability within the Saudi Arabian higher education sector. This study, therefore, contributes a distinctive viewpoint to the broader discourse on resilient leadership.

Fourth, this study underscores the pivotal role of an enhanced higher education sector in achieving Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. By focusing on resilient leadership within the Saudi higher education context, the study provides critical insights into how leadership styles influenced by cultural and organisational factors contribute to the sector's transformation. The findings demonstrate that resilient leadership, characterised by adaptability, strategic vision alignment, and cultivating a culture of resilience, is essential for navigating the complexities of educational reforms and the strategic objectives outlined in Vision 2030. The study contributes to and expands upon existing literature, including the works of Gonaim (2019), Nurunnabi (2017), and Shafai (2018), by affirming that leadership in Saudi higher education is deeply interwoven with cultural values. The study's emphasis on the interplay between resilient leadership and institutional success in Saudi universities offers a nuanced perspective on the leadership styles necessary for driving systemic changes in line with national aspirations. It posits that a university leader's resilience, manifested in their ability to embrace change, foster innovation, and lead with a forward-thinking approach, is a key indicator of success and instrumental in realising the ambitious goals of Vision 2030.

7.4 Practical Implications

Research on leadership in Saudi higher education is essential given that Saudi Arabia's government has launched Vision 2030, which aims to change the way that the education sector works. There are several practical implications for leaders in Saudi higher education and these are explained in the paragraphs that follow.

In terms of practical implications, this study provides universities with information about the importance of resilient leadership in attaining a sustained competitive advantage over institutional rivals. This gives universities the ability to stay ahead of present or potential competition and ensures their long-term survival. Given the transformative goals of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, this study underscores the necessity for a comprehensive and holistic approach to resilient leadership development in the higher education sector. The emergent framework (Figure 6.1) of this study, encompassing self-leadership capabilities, sustainable social bonds, stress coping strategies, and positive mindset practices, serves as a foundational guide for such development. To implement this framework effectively, higher education institutions should invest in specialised training programs. These programmes could include modules on goal-setting for self-leadership, role-playing exercises to strengthen sustainable social bonds, mindfulness training for stress coping, and seminars to cultivate a positive mindset. These specific training modules would provide leaders with practical tools and techniques to enhance their resilience in line with the unique challenges and objectives of Vision 2030.

This study suggests that resilient leadership practices can be implemented throughout Saudi Arabia's higher education sector because of their pivotal role in helping individuals cope with uncertainties. The study highlights the importance of self-leadership capabilities as a part of resilient leadership, focusing on personal characteristics or traits such as a sense of purpose, self-reflection, proactivity, creativity, passion, patriotism, and self-efficacy, as well as knowing how to solve strategic problems. Consequently, leaders can overcome any uncertainties that come with change, manage challenges that arise in the pursuit of strategic objectives, and adapt their strategies to better serve their institution. This also implies that resilient leadership training should be a key component of professional development programmes within universities, with a strategic focus on the skills and behaviours that are most relevant to the goals of Vision 2030.

This study provides practical insights for leaders in the Saudi higher education sector by highlighting the importance of developing strong relationships among team members to foster resilient leadership. Leaders who focus on establishing robust relationships and honest communication in their teams reinforce their own position and status in the university and the overall sector, positioning their organisations to better achieve the objectives of their institution and those of government policy. The study contends that viable organisational and personal connections create a foundation of trust and collaboration, which is crucial for realising transformative strategic visions. By prioritising sustainable connections among team members, leaders can facilitate a more cohesive and effective team environment in all faculties and departments. Training in these areas should include modules on fostering team cohesion, transparent communication, and regular team bonding activities.

The study highlights the importance of coping with stress as a key aspect of resilient leadership. Leaders who engage in activities such as seeking advice from a trusted individual, having honest communication, engaging in physical activities such as sports and religious practices, taking a break from work, spending time with friends and family, and welcoming changes can better cope with stress and readily confront challenges. Leaders in Saudi universities can engage in these habits to learn about, navigate, and address the wide range of stressors that they may experience within the institution's environment. Closely related to this theme is the role of a positive mindset and leaders who foster a supportive and efficient work environment, instill hope and motivation, maintain an optimistic attitude towards new plans, viewing them as opportunities for growth, and are open to feedback so that they are better equipped to achieve transformative strategic plans. The implications strongly suggest specific skills and behaviours that leaders can concentrate on to become more effective in their roles. Leaders can benefit from training and development programmes that help them develop their resilient leadership skills, including effective planning, problem-solving, maintaining a positive mindset, coping with stress, and interpersonal communication. Training in these areas should include modules on stress coping strategies and promote a positive mindset.

In line with the emergent framework, the study suggests that these aspects of resilient leadership are pivotal in navigating the uncertainties and challenges of Vision 2030.

Therefore, it encourages policy-makers to revaluate and adjust Saudi higher education policies to emphasise resilient leadership training. Such a strategic focus on resilience training will equip leaders to effectively drive their institutions towards the goals of Vision 2030.

In summary, resilient leadership is of paramount importance in the Saudi higher education sector and it is the key to facilitating a proactive progression towards achieving Vision 2030. By fostering a culture of resilience and continuous personal and professional improvement, leaders can positively guide their institutions and contribute to the government's strategic goals.

7.5 Contribution of Study

The literature on leadership has predominantly focused on the performance of higher education in the world's advanced economies. This is an issue that requires attention in emerging nations, such as Saudi Arabia, which is changing its economic system gradually. Given that there have been only a few studies on leadership in the Saudi higher education sector, this study has contributed to the body of knowledge on the effectiveness of leadership by conducting a qualitative analysis. The study makes a significant contribution to extending the body of knowledge in the field of leadership by exploring resilient leadership in Saudi Arabia. It should be noted that most of the literature on resilient leadership has concentrated more on other sectors, such as healthcare, in developed countries whereas not much is known about leadership in the Saudi higher education sector. This study addressed the gaps in the literature by empirically exploring the nature of resilient leadership in Saudi higher education.

The primary contribution of this study is its identification of the paramount behaviours and skills of resilient leaders in the Saudi higher education system. Its key findings contribute to the current study about the ways that the leaders of Saudi universities can be resilient in terms of exerting a positive impact on a university's performance. In essence, resilient leadership as a theoretical concept has provided an opportunity to understand how the Saudi higher education system functions.

This study improves the knowledge on leadership by exploring the characteristics, behaviours and skills that are involved in resilience and the ways that Saudi Arabian

institution leaders are expected to effectively cope with changes and adversity in the pursuit of the ambitious goals of Saudi Vision 2030. In this study, a significant contribution is the establishment of a common framework of resilient leadership in Saudi higher education using four key factors: self-leadership capabilities, sustainable social bonds, stress coping strategies, and positive mindset practice. This framework provides leaders with insights to improve their strategies, foster resilient leadership, and navigate the evolving challenges of the higher education sector, thereby aligning their efforts with Vision 2030's objectives. Hence, the findings of this study serve as a basis for researchers and leaders of Saudi universities. In addition, the findings have much potential to serve as a useful foundation for future empirical studies.

7.5.1 Policy Contributions to Vision 2030

This study documents pivotal policy implications for Vision 2030 concerning the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia. The significant role of resilient leadership in realising Vision 2030 is especially evident within Saudi Arabia's higher education system. With an emphasis on raising universities to international standards and achieving top rankings, it is imperative that academic institutions collaborate closely and cooperate more effectively. An effective strategy for achieving this could be the establishment of consortia involving leaders of Saudi Arabian institutions. Active participation in such groups would facilitate the amalgamation of resources, promote the dissemination of resilient leadership practices, support joint research ventures, and ensure academic objectives are aligned. By embracing this cooperative paradigm, there is potential to foster a cohesive approach towards Vision 2030, transcending institutional boundaries. This ensures that universities are not isolated entities but work together harmoniously, benefiting from shared insights and leveraging the collective strengths of the consortium.

Considering the challenges faced by Saudi higher education leaders and the key role of resilient leadership in overcoming adversities, there is a compelling case for introducing a resilience leadership action plan. The framework developed in this study can be instrumental during planning phases to integrate essential components of resilient leadership, of which the components incorporate self-leadership capabilities, sustainable social bonds, stress-coping strategies, and positive mindset practices. To operationalize these insights, the action plans might encompass training programmes to hone resilient leadership practices. Such programmes can empower leaders to take the initiative, solve

problems creatively, and align their institution's objectives with Vision 2030. Promoting sustainable social bonds is equally vital. Regular team-building activities, honest and straightforward communication, and platforms for open discussion can fortify these bonds. To further enhance resilience, institutions might offer wellness programmes focusing on physical activity, wellbeing support, and work-life balance, enabling leaders to excel in their roles. Lastly, incorporating positive mindset practices within the higher education framework can elevate morale, fostering an atmosphere filled with hope, optimism, and motivation.

The resilient leadership framework developed in this study can serve as a foundational pillar for policy development in the Saudi higher education sector. Integrating this framework into policy initiatives can foster a culture of resilient leadership across all levels of the education system. Moreover, the action plans for higher education institutions to execute the framework will ensure that education institutions are aligned with Vision 2030. In summary, by advocating for the formation of consortia and developing resilience action plans that apply the resilience leadership framework at the policy level, this can create a comprehensive approach that enhances the resilience leadership of leaders and directly contributes to the goals and objectives of the Saudi government's Vision 2030 economic plan.

7.6 Recommendations

In this study, the researcher aimed to explore the presence and relevance of resilient leadership among leaders in Saudi public universities and its relevance to achieving the Saudi government's Vision 2030. Acknowledging the unique socio-cultural and educational context of Saudi Arabia, the findings provide in-depth insights for these university leaders, instrumental for understanding the challenges and opportunities in creating a robust higher education sector. While these insights offer valuable perspectives within the specific Saudi Arabian context, their applicability to other contexts should be considered in light of the study's focused scope. These insights can be employed to propose solutions and recommendations that address the current shortcomings in the sector, thereby facilitating the progress of a more resilient leadership culture in alignment with Vision 2030.

Strategically, the study's findings reveal that resilient leadership is a critical success factor for navigating changes and challenges in Saudi Arabian higher education institutions. Resilient leadership involves preparing an organisation using a clear vision and values that resonate with the team, all employees, internal and external clients and other key stakeholders. In response, this study recommends initiating specialised training programmes in resilient leadership. These programmes should enhance self-leadership capabilities, foster sustainable social bonds, develop effective stress coping strategies, and nurture a positive mindset. The training approach, incorporating interactive methods like practical exercises and role-playing, is designed to enable real-world application of skills. The dynamic nature of the higher education sector necessitates a training curriculum that includes awareness-raising, career development, individual development plans, and structured education assistance. A well-defined implementation plan is essential, outlining the schedule, necessary resources, and methodologies. This should be complemented by regular feedback mechanisms to assess and refine the training's effectiveness. These programmes aim to highlight the significance of resilient leadership, especially when confronted with change, and to underscore its central role in realising Vision 2030. Through these initiatives, leaders will gain specific tools and insights, enabling them to manage change dynamics effectively, counter resistance, and instill a culture of adaptability within their teams and institutions.

Operationally, the findings recommend that leaders in Saudi Arabian higher education institutions prioritise the fostering of an accountable, responsible and collaborative environment by encouraging open communication, feedback and teamwork to build resilience within organisations. To operationalize these concepts, tools such as monthly feedback sessions, open forums, and regular team-building workshops can be employed, along with digital platforms for ongoing dialogue. These measures will enable leaders to address challenges promptly and identify opportunities for improvement effectively. Simultaneously, emphasising teamwork, collaboration and mutual support enables team members to tackle challenges collectively and develop the necessary skills to withstand adversity. These practices, combined with resilience-focused training programmes that encompass components such as stress coping strategies, problem-solving and decision-making under pressure, will equip leaders with the necessary tools to effectively navigate challenging situations in pursuit of the Vision 2030 objectives.

During periods of change and challenge, it is vital for Saudi higher education leaders to provide clarity and direction and foster resilience while remaining focused on achieving the best possible outcomes. Aligning their institution's goals with Vision 2030 and clearly communicating these expectations to all members, as well as engaging them in setting the organisation's goals, are crucial for success. By emphasising the importance of resilience, learning from setbacks and prioritising self-care, leaders can support teams to stay focused and motivated as they work towards achieving these objectives. Additionally, articulating resilience strategies that support leaders during challenging times is crucial. Practices such as confiding in a trusted partner or friend, engaging in physical exercise, participating in prayer or religious activities, joining support groups, spending time with family and engaging in reflective practices are crucial. These strategies, as shared by the participants in this study, should be integrated into leadership training to offer leaders diverse methods for managing stress and navigating adversity. This study encourages leaders to view setbacks as learning opportunities, fostering a growth mindset and building resilience to overcome future challenges. By learning from failures, leaders can adapt and develop more effective strategies for the future. Providing resources and support for self-care initiatives can lead to a healthier and more resilient type of leadership, which is better equipped to achieve the requirements of government policies and plans.

This study recommends that Saudi higher education institutions organise relevant and effective seminars or training courses for resilient leadership. Such training should concentrate on building the strengths and positive aspects that leaders are expected to exhibit. By fostering continuous learning and viewing challenges as opportunities, this training would set a precedent for growth and innovation. Furthermore, the seminars would help leaders inspire and guide their teams more effectively, paving the way for an education environment that is more adaptive, forward-thinking, and aligned with the goals of Vision 2030. Ultimately, the study encourages Saudi universities to recognise the importance of addressing resilient leadership at the strategic, operational, and personal levels. In this way, they can be better positioned to navigate the complexities of the evolving education sector and align more effectively with Vision 2030.

7.7 Limitations of Study

Although this study achieved its main aims and objectives, there are some limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, the study was limited to the public sector and focused specifically on 18 higher education leaders in that system. Private sector universities were not included in the sample, which may limit or simply make impossible the generalisability of the findings to private enterprise. Nonetheless, private sector universities in Saudi Arabia are overseen by the Saudi Ministry of Education, which sets the standards and guidelines for all education institutions. Thus, private universities share some similarities with public ones in terms of their governance structures, policies, culture and procedures. Thus, to some extent, the lessons that are learned from this study may still be relevant and applicable to private institutions although it is important to consider the specific contextual factors of each university.

Another limitation of this study is that all the case studies were conducted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The unique cultural, economic and political factors of this country may limit the generalisability of the findings to other contexts. However, the author of this study believes that the lessons that are learned from these case studies may still be applicable to the Middle East region, such as the other Gulf countries, which share similar cultural and social values as well as economic and political structures. Moreover, the Saudi Vision 2030 plan, which states the government's economic and social development goals, shares similarities with the strategic plans of other Gulf countries. Nonetheless, it is important to consider the specific circumstantial factors of each country when applying the strategies and approaches that were identified in the case studies.

In addition, a notable limitation of this study is that all participants were males. This demographic choice was reflective of the current socio-cultural norms within the Saudi higher education leadership landscape, where male leadership roles are predominant. While this focus provides in-depth insights specific to the existing leadership framework in Saudi Arabia, it also presents limitations in terms of gender diversity. The absence of female leaders in the study could potentially impact the applicability of the findings to scenarios where gender diversity plays a significant role in leadership dynamics. Although this limitation aligns with the cultural context of the study, it's important to acknowledge that expanding the research to include diverse gender perspectives could offer a more comprehensive understanding of resilient leadership practices.

7.8 Future Research

The current study is the first in Saudi Arabia to explore resilient leadership as shown by those in charge of Saudi universities. Resilient leadership is crucial for Saudi university leaders when they navigate change and uncertainty while working towards meeting ambitious economic targets. By adapting and persevering, resilient leaders effectively guide their institutions through transformations, ensuring competitiveness and a high-quality education that is aligned with national objectives. As this study was limited to public Saudi universities, future studies could consider including private universities in Saudi Arabia. Given the differences in their operations and funding, private universities may face similar challenges as public universities and could therefore benefit from resilient leadership. Future research may employ the emergent framework from this study's findings as a base to explore the manifestation of resilient leadership within private universities. This approach would improve the findings' generalisability and offer a deeper understanding of resilient leadership across institutional and cultural contexts in Saudi higher education. Longitudinal research designs could be employed to investigate the evolution of resilient leadership and the long-term implications of resilient leadership on institutional performance and success.

Furthermore, new research could deploy quantitative techniques, such as surveys or structured questionnaires, combined with a qualitative methodology, such as that used in this study, to collect data on resilient leadership practices and their results. This would make it possible to examine the connections between various aspects of resilient leadership and institutional effectiveness and to create models and hypotheses that are grounded in empirical data. Future researchers can compare the experiences and tactics of leaders in higher education with those in other sectors, such as healthcare, industry or government, to better understand the specific difficulties and opportunities that are faced by higher education leaders in Saudi Arabia. This comparison could offer important information and data about the elements that contribute to effective leadership in higher education and assist in the development of focused interventions and policies.

Future studies can assess the efficacy of certain interventions to promote resilient leadership in higher education institutions. For example, the effect of stress management seminars or leadership development programmes on leaders' resilience and organisational success could be evaluated. This would give higher education institutions

and policymakers evidence-based recommendations on ways to consolidate leadership and make it truly effective. One of the vital recommendations that this study makes is for researchers to conduct similar studies by focusing on the education sector and comparing the Saudi experience with those of advanced economies. In such a way, a comparative study would highlight the traits of resilient leaders in developed and developing nations. As a result, the practices that the Saudi higher education sector lacks will become the focal point for the leadership of the universities. In this way, the Saudi higher education sector can overcome discrepancies in practices, unlike the higher education systems of developed countries.

7.9 Conclusion

This chapter concluded the thesis on resilient leadership in Saudi higher education institutions and the ways that they fit into the government's Vision 2030 blueprint. The study addressed a research gap by exploring the presence and relevance of resilient leadership among tertiary education leaders. A qualitative, case study approach was used, involving 18 leaders from three Saudi public universities. The findings provided valuable insights into the role of resilient leadership, including key attributes such as self-leadership capabilities, sustainable social bonds, stress coping strategies, and positive mindset practice, in the Saudi higher education sector and its importance for achieving the country's strategic vision.

This study identified the importance of self-leadership capabilities, sustainable social bonds, stress coping strategies, and positive mindset practice that contribute to resilient leadership, which can help university leaders to navigate uncertainties, maintain persistence and navigate challenges in pursuit of strategic goals. The practical implications of this study provided guidance to leaders in the Saudi higher education sector on ways to use resilient leadership practices to enhance their skills and effectively handle issues and challenges. Recommendations included developing customised training programmes that focus on resilient leadership skills, promoting awareness-raising programmes, fostering well-functioning and meaningful collaborative environments, aligning institutional goals with Vision 2030 and viewing setbacks as learning opportunities.

The study discussed the importance of future studies to expand the understanding of resilient leadership in higher education, specifically, in the context of Saudi Arabia given that in the past few years, its economic system has been much more receptive to changes in international trade, commerce and relationships. Suggestions for future studies included using larger and more diversified samples, using longitudinal research designs, employing quantitative techniques or other forms of mixed methodologies, comparing the experiences and tactics of leaders across sectors and assessing the efficacy of interventions to promote resilient leadership. Furthermore, the study recommended conducting comparative studies that focus on higher education in developed and developing countries to identify best practices and address discrepancies in the Saudi system.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

General questions:

1. Name
2. Age. Or age group
   a. 30–40
   b. 40–50
   c. 50–60
   d. Over 60
3. Education background?
4. How long have you worked in this university?
5. What is your position (title) in your university?
6. How many years have you served in the position?

Interview Questions

1. What are some of your roles?   a. Are your roles the same the whole time or do they keep changing?   b. What brings these changes in your roles? How do you adapt to the changing roles?
2. As a leader, do you have to make quick adaptations/changes/decisions to the education policies?   a. Why do you make these adaptations?   b. After you've made your decisions, do you reflect on them? (i.e. could I have handled the situation differently or made the decision differently?)
3. Have you set your department or college's goals? Are your goals aligned to the institution's vision? How best can you describe these goals? Are they ambitious or simple? Why do you think so?   a. How have you prepared yourself mentally, physically and emotionally to achieve these goals?   b. Do you have a routine, mantra, person, verse or any source of inspiration? How has this helped you to inspire your team? Has it been effective?
4. Can you please describe your relationship with the people you work with? Are you curious? Do you care about them? Do you express feelings to your team? Why or why not?   a. Do you think a leader should be attached to or bond with their subordinates or colleagues? Why or why not?   b. Do you think that strong personal attachments or connections with others have affected your leadership, especially in how you have dealt with disappointment and failures? How and why did they help you recover?   c. Do you have people/places/goals at work and outside (i.e. at home) or in other fields of work that you count on? How have these networks contributed to how you deal with stressful situations? Why do you think that these people, goals or places are important?

5. Can you please explain the roles that your team plays in achieving education policies and implementing vision?

a. How would you rate your relationship with your teams? Do you openly communicate with each other? Why or why not?

b. Can you pinpoint cases in which you have identified when colleagues were under stress? How did you know this? How did such a scenario affect the team?

c. How did you deal with the issue? Did you reach out to the person or did you assign someone else to deal with it? Why? Was it effective? If so, why?

d. Do you think that your team trusts you? Why? What have you done to cultivate their trust in you?

e. Working in diverse teams brings a set of challenges. Do you think that you have dealt with biases and discrimination effectively? How have you done so? Has this earned you respect and admiration from your juniors, seniors and other staff? Why or why not?

6. Have you experienced any setbacks in adapting education policies?

a. Given these setbacks, do you have confidence in your ability to analyse problems and to find solutions to long-term problems?

b. How can you describe your outlook towards the future of Saudi Arabia's education? Do you foresee any further challenges or setbacks? Do you think that you are emotionally, mentally and physically prepared to deal with these uncertainties? Please explain why.

7. As a leader, you face many challenges and changes that tax your brain. Please explain how you maintain a balanced approach.

a. How do you create new ideas? (Fostering relationships, how do you understand the organisations' functioning to the expertise and insights of the subordinates to meet the organisational vision?)

8. Can you recall a time when you were faced with an imminent crisis? What did you do? Were you able to find a successful solution? How did you do it?

a. If your solution was not successful, how did your team/superiors view such a failure? Did they criticise your approach? How did you feel? How did you deal with your feelings? Were you guilty, angry, demotivated or re-invigorated to find another solution? Why did you feel this way?

b. Did you ask for help from your colleagues or subordinates? Why?

9. There are many things that are changing in the higher education sector. What are some of the changes that you have observed in recent times?

a. How do you think these changes have affected you as a leader and what have you done to deal with them? Why did you choose these measures to address the challenges? Were they effective? If yes, why? If no, why? If they were not effective, how did you cope with the outcomes?

b. How do you think these changes have affected your team and the learners in this institution?

c. What have you done to bring them on board in your leadership capacity?

10. Do you ever experience a sense of urgency or pressure in addressing issues in educational policies? Please describe how you feel during such times, namely, your mood and your energy levels (exhaustion).

a. Can you please give me examples of the warnings that your body gives you when you are overwhelmed, mental and physical? When you experience these symptoms, do you heed the distress signals that your body gives you? Why or why not? Are these signals important to you as a leader? Why or why not?

b. Do you worry about your organisation? Why and how do you ensure that you do not worry too much or too little? How does too much worry affect you and how do you prevent yourself from reaching your breaking point?

c. Are there ways that you relieve the tensions and stress that comes with sustained pressures? Are they effective in helping you to regain positive energy and relieve tension? Why do you think that they work for you?

11. Are changes being rolled out in the Saudi Arabian education system? Please name some of these changes.

a. Can you please describe the general attitude and environment in HE as these changes occur (i.e. lots of uncertainties and worries about one's role, tensions, strained relationships). Why do you think this is so?

b. As a leader, how have these changes affected your mental and emotional wellbeing, especially when you have to make hard decisions?

c. How do you deal with these feelings? Do you let yourself experience all the feelings and acknowledge them or grieve the loss of your feeling? Please explain why you embrace these feelings. Do you think your approach is effective in dealing with the changes in higher education?

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12. How do you empower your subordinates to adapt and embrace uncertainties during periods of change?

a. Have these interventions been successful?

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13. What are some of the challenges facing higher education in Saudi Arabia?

a. How have these challenges affected the institution?

b. How have these challenges affected your role as a leader? In terms of the decisions that you make, how quickly have you had to make them?

c. How do you deal with these changes? Are these approaches effective? Why or why not?

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14. One of the major strategic visions currently in place is Vision 2030. What are the roles of universities in this? What specific thing(s) have changed in this institution as a result of Vision 2030 (e.g. in the area of curriculum, staff development and teaching methods)?

a. Can you say that your current institution's strategic plans are aligned to Vision 2030? How?

b. In which areas has the university done extremely well in line with Vision 2030? Why?

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15. In your area of leadership, what specific activities have you implemented specifically to fulfil the role of universities in achieving Vision 2030? Why did you recommend them?

Can you please suggest what you think should be done to make universities more responsive to their role in implementing government's strategic visions, such as Vision 2030?

Appendix 2: Letters of Approval from Case 1, 2 and 3 Universities

Jerusalem Translation

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15 Dec 2020

EXTRACT TRANSLATION OF A TASK FACILITATION LETTER

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Education

Vice President for Graduate & Research

Researcher/ Abdulrahman Eita Al Shamlan

According to your email application for an approval letter to conduct a scientific study about: Resilient Leadership: A Study Concerning the Saudi Vision 2020 and Higher Education Sector
We have no objection with the condition of getting the approval of the Ethics Committee of Victoria University.

Stamped and signed

MOHAMED HASSAN EL SAAFEN
CPN5LM20K
ARABIC <-> ENGLISH
VALID TO 01/02/2024

SIGNATURE:

TRANSLATION DATE: 15.12.2020

CERTIFIED ADVANCED TRANSLATOR

I, Mohamed El Saafen, NAATI accredited Advanced (Level 4) Arabic < > English Translator ID (CPN5LM20K) certify that this is a true and accurate translation of the Letter in the Arabic Language for Abdulrahman Eita Al Shamlan

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم

مكتب الوكيل

سعادة المبتعث باحث الدكتوراة الأستاذ : عبدالرحمن عيظه ال شملان   وفقه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته . . . وبعد

بناءً على طلبكم المرسل عبر الايميل من قبلكم بشأن طلب خطاب بالموافقة على إجراء
دراسة علمية حول القيادة المرنة في التعليم العالي بالمملكة العربية السعودية من أجل تحديد
التحديات و الأساليب الجديدة التي يمكن أن تساعد في تحقيق رؤية ٢٠٣٠

عليه نفيدكم بأنه لا مانع لدينا مبدئياً على أن يتم احضار موافقة لجنة اخلاقيات
البحث لدى جامعة فيكتوريا

وتقبلوا التحية والتقدير ،،،

وكيل الجامعة

٤٢/

I, Mohamed El Saafen, NAATI accredited Advanced (Level 4) Arabic < > English
Translator ID (CPN5LM20K) certify that this is a copy of the Letter in the Arabic
Language for Abdulrahman Eita Al Shamlan

Jerusalem Translation

ESL / ARABIC TEACHER
Mohamed El Saafen
Advanced Level (4)Translator
Mobile: 0422 648 655
Email: saafen1959@gmail.com
jerusalem_translation@hotmail.com

القدس للترجمة
مدرس لغة عربية/ إنجليزية
45A Spring Street
Thomastown, Vic. 3074
NAATI ID (PN5LM20K)

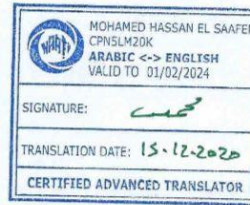Registration No: 306/2020
Translated from Arabic
15 Dec 2020

EXTRACT TRANSLATION OF A TASK FACILITATION LETTER

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Education
▬▬▬▬▬▬

Vice rector's Office for Graduate Studies
Scientific Research Centre
To the Dean,
In accordance to the approval of the Rector to the third meeting of the permanent committee of the scientific Research o▬ University for the academic year 1436/1437 (2014-2015) of 13/1/1437 H (26/10/2015), article 4 to authorize the vice-rector of graduate studies and scientific research regarding the questionnaire, it has been approved that

Application of the research tool entitled: Resilient Leadership: A study Concerning the Saudi Vision 2020 and Higher Education Sector

Presented from the

▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬

To facilitate meeting with some of the deans and heads of departments at ▬▬ University in order to get information to pursue your PHD research at Victoria University, Australia.

Signed by the University Vice Rector

▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬

Stamped and signed

MOHAMED HASSAN EL SAAFEN
CPN5LM20K
ARABIC <-> ENGLISH
VALID TO 01/02/2024
SIGNATURE:
TRANSLATION DATE: 15.12.2020
CERTIFIED ADVANCED TRANSLATOR

I, Mohamed El Saafen, NAATI accredited Advanced (Level 4) Arabic < > English Translator ID (CPN5LM20K) certify that this is a true and accurate translation of the Letter in the Arabic Language for Abdulrahman Eita Al Shamlan

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

المملكة العربية السعودية

وزارة التعليم

مركز النشر العلمي

رمزه (٥١/٤/١٠)

الرقــــم: ....

التاريخ: / / ١٤ هـ

المرفقات: ....

2030

سعادة عميد ....   حفظه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته، وبعد:

فبناءً على موافقة معالي مدير الجامعة على محضر اللجنة الدائمة للنشر العلمي الثالث بجامعة .... للعام الجامعي ١٤٣٦/١٤٣٧هـ بتاريخ ١٤٣٧/٠١/٢٣هـ ،البند الرابع؛ والمتضمن تفويض سعادة وكيل الجامعة للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي بشأن الاستبانات؛ عليه تمت الموافقة على:

تطبيق الأداة البحثية بعنوان:

(القيادة المرنة في التعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية من أجل تحديد التحديات الاساليب الجديدة التي يمكن أن تساعد في تحقيق رؤية ٢٠٣٠)

المقدمة من المبتعث/ عبدالرحمن بن عيضه ال شملان طالب دكتوراه بجامعة Victoria بأستراليا، وتسهيل أجراء مقابلات مع العمداء ورؤساء الاقسام في ....، وذلك بغرض الحصول على معلومات لاستكمال متطلبات بحث علمي.

وتقبلوا سعادتكم فائق التحية والتقدير

I, Mohamed El Saafen, NAATI accredited Advanced (Level 4) Arabic < > English Translator ID (CPN5LM20K) certify that this is a copy of the Letter in the Arabic Language for Abdulrahman Eita Al Shamlan

الأخ الباحث / عبدالرحمن بن عيظه ال شملان   المحترم
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

أفيدكم انه لا مانع لدى ████ قيامكم بمقابلة بعض القياديين
بالجامعة بحثكم لإكمال في الدكتوراه بجامعة فيكتوريا - استراليا شريطة حصولكم على موافقة
اللجنة الأخلاقية بجامعة فيكتوريا.

وكيل الجامعة
للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي

MOHAMED HASSAN EL SAAFEN
CPN5LM20K
ARABIC <-> ENGLISH
VALID TO 01/02/2024

SIGNATURE:

TRANSLATION DATE: 15-12-2020

CERTIFIED ADVANCED TRANSLATOR

I, Mohamed El Saafen, NAATI accredited Advanced (Level 4) Arabic < > English
Translator ID (CPN5LM20K) certify that this is a copy of the Letter in the Arabic
Language for Abdulrahman Eita Al Shamlan

Appendix 3: Participation Information

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: Resilient Leadership: A Study Connecting the Saudi Vision 2030 and Higher Education Sector

This project is being conducted by a student researcher, Abdulrahman Al Shamlan as part of an integrated PhD study at Victoria University under the supervision of Dr Selvi Kannan and Dr Alpert Haddad from the College of Business.

Project explanation

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the presence of resilient leadership among leaders in the Saudi higher education sector towards achieving transformative strategic visions for the country, especially Vision 2030. This study includes interviews with deans and heads department in higher education in Saudi Arabia. The aim is to generate new ideas and concepts to understand the challenges facing leadership in KSA and how resilient leadership can help achieve vision 2030. This is because the higher education plays a central role in developing a workforce which is highly skilled and knowledgeable to help the government in achieving its vision of a diversified knowledge-based economy.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to provide your professional and related experiences and views on the challenges and opportunities facing higher education leadership in KSA. You will be asked to take part in an internet interview for between 30-60 minutes. The interview may have potential social risks for you in case there are comments that may be perceived as negative against your institution. However, this risk is mitigated by making your selection process entirely anonymous with only you being aware that you have been requested to participate in the study.

What will I gain from participating?

This study does not guarantee monetary rewards for your participation. You may not gain anything, but you may be adding value to the existing literature on leadership position. You will be giving back to your society based on your leadership position in the university. Therefore, you will get the opportunity to reflect on your leadership approaches and application to your subordinates. In this way, the interview will be a means for you to review your leadership position, strengths and weaknesses and identify areas that need further attention.

How will the information I give be used?

This study aims to develop new knowledge and understanding on higher education leadership during this time of change and reform in the education sector and the economy as a whole. Therefore, the information you provide will be used for academic purposes only to help in developing new knowledge and concepts on resilient leadership in higher education and its role in vision 2030. Resilience is important for leadership because it promotes adaptability during time of crisis and change which is currently being experienced in KSA as the government is diversifying its economy as Vision 2030. Resilience is also important in promoting robustness during a crisis, flexibility, resourcefulness and redundancy to adapt to change during times of adversity.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

Your participation in this research involves almost no risk. No reference to individuals or organisations will be made as the study will be entirely anonymous right from the process of sampling the participants, data coding, analysis and reporting. We will replace the name of any individual or organisations participating in the research with a numerical code to ensure that no one can trace your responses back to you. This is a qualitative interview which seeks your views and opinions in regards to the leadership approaches in higher education in Saudi Arabia.

How will this project be conducted?

The study will be conducted through skype or zoom platforms over the internet in order to comply with the COVID 19 social distancing guidelines However, if there is an opportunity to conduct face-to-face interviews, then I will do so, but the COVID-19 guidelines will be strictly adhered to. The process will involve conversing with the interviewer who will ask questions and you will provide responses accordingly.

Who is conducting the study?

The research will be conducted by the student researcher, Abdulrahman Al Shamlan PhD student
Phone: +61417164444 Or Saudi No: +966531607911
Email: abdulrahman.alshamlan1@live.vu.edu.au
Chief Investigator: Dr Selvi Kannan
Phone: +61 (3) 9919 5374
Email: selvi.kannan@vu.edu.au
Victoria University – The graduate School of Business
Co-investigator: Proof Albert Haddad
Phone: +61402616822
Email: albert@leadwise.com.au

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above.
If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Translation copy (Arabic)

معلومات للمشاركين في البحث

أنت مدعو للمشاركة

أنت مدعو للمشاركة في مشروع بحثي بعنوان: القيادة المرنة: دراسة تربط بين رؤية المملكة 2030 وقطاع التعليم العالي

يقوم بهذا المشروع باحث الدكتوراه الطالب الدكتور عبد الرحمن الشملان ضمن دراسة دكتوراه متكاملة في جامعة فيكتوريا تحت إشراف الدكتورة سيلفي كانان والدكتور ألبرت حداد من كلية إدارة الأعمال.

شرح المشروع

والغرض الرئيسي من الدراسة هو تقصي القيادة المرنة في التعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية من أجل تحديد التحديات والمقاربات الجديدة التي يمكن أن تساعد في تحقيق رؤية 2030. تبحث هذه الدراسة في خصائص ودور وتطبيق المرونة. تتضمن هذه الدراسة مقابلات مع عمداء ورؤساء أقسام التعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية. والهدف من ذلك هو توليد أفكار ومفاهيم جديدة لفهم التحديات التي تواجه القيادة في المملكة العربية السعودية وكيف يمكن للقيادة المرنة أن تساعد في تحقيق رؤية 2030. ويرجع ذلك إلى أن التعليم العالي يلعب دوراً محورياً في تطوير قوة عاملة ذات مهارات عالية ومعرفة عالية تساعد الحكومة في تحقيق رؤيتها لاقتصاد متنوع قائم على المعرفة.

ماذا سيطلب مني أن أفعل؟

سوف يطلب منك تقديم خبراتك المهنية وما يتصل بها من آراء حول التحديات والفرص التي تواجه قيادة التعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية. سوف يطلب منك المشاركة في مقابلة على الإنترنت لمدة تتراوح بين 30-60 دقيقة. قد يكون للمقابلة مخاطر اجتماعية محتملة بالنسبة لك في حالة وجود تعليقات قد ينظر إليها على أنها سلبية ضد مؤسستك. ومع ذلك، يتم تخفيف هذا الخطر من خلال جعل عملية الاختيار الخاصة بك مجهولة الهوية تماما مع العلم بأنه تم طلب منك المشاركة في الدراسة.

ما الذي سأجنيه من المشاركة؟

لا تضمن هذه الدراسة مكافآت مالية مقابل مشاركتك. قد لا تكسب أي شيء، ولكن قد تكون إضافة قيمة إلى الأدب الحالي على منصب القيادة. سوف تعيد الجميل لمجتمعك بناء على موقعك القيادي في الجامعة. لذلك، سوف تحصل على فرصة للتفكير في نهج القيادة وتطبيق على مرؤوسيك. وبهذه الطريقة، ستكون المقابلة وسيلة لك لمراجعة موقع القيادة ونقاط القوة والضعف وتحديد المجالات التي تحتاج إلى مزيد من الاهتمام.

كيف سيتم استخدام المعلومات التي أعطيها؟

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تطوير المعرفة والفهم الجديدين حول قيادة التعليم العالي خلال هذا الوقت من التغيير والإصلاح في قطاع التعليم والاقتصاد ككل. لذلك، فإن المعلومات التي تقدمها سوف تستخدم لأغراض أكاديمية فقط للمساعدة في تطوير المعرفة والمفاهيم الجديدة حول القيادة المرنة في التعليم العالي ودورها في رؤية 2030. إن المرونة مهمة للقيادة لأنها تعزز القدرة على التكيف خلال فترة الأزمات والتغييرات التي تشهدها المملكة حالياً حيث تقوم الحكومة بتنويع اقتصادها كرؤية 2030. كما أن المرونة مهمة في تعزيز المتانة أثناء الأزمات والمرونة والحيلة والتكرار للتكيف مع التغيير في أوقات الشدائد.

ما هي المخاطر المحتملة للمشاركة في هذا المشروع؟

مشاركتك في هذا البحث لا تنطوي على أي خطر تقريبا. لن يتم الإشارة إلى الأفراد أو المنظمات لأن الدراسة ستكون مجهولة المصدر تماما من عملية أخذ العينات من المشاركين وترميز البيانات وتحليلها والإبلاغ عنها. سوف نستبدل اسم أي فرد أو منظمات مشاركة في البحث برمز رقمي لضمان عدم تمكن أي شخص من تتبع ردودك إليك. هذه مقابلة نوعية تبحث عن آرائك وآرائك فيما يتعلق بمنهج القيادة في التعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية

كيف سيتم تنفيذ هذا المشروع؟

سيتم إجراء الدراسة من خلال منصات سكايب أو زووم عبر الإنترنت من أجل الامتثال لإرشادات التباعد الاجتماعي لكوفيد 19 ومع ذلك، إذا كانت هناك فرصة لإجراء مقابلات وجها لوجه، فسأفعل ذلك، لكن سيتم التقيد الصارم بإرشادات المتبعة لكوفيد 19. ستشمل العملية التحدث مع المحاور الذي سيطرح أسئلة وستقدم إجابات وفقا لذلك

من الذي يجري الدراسة؟

سيتم إجراء البحث من قبل الطالب الباحث، الطالب عبد الرحمن الشملان طالب دكتوراه
رقم الهاتف: +61417164444 أو السعودية: +966531607911
البريد الإلكتروني: abdulrahman.alshamlan1@live.vu.edu.au
كبير المحققين: الدكتورة سيلفي كانان
رقم الهاتف: +61 (3) 9919 5374
البريد الإلكتروني: selvi.kannan@vu.edu.au
جامعة فيكتوريا – كلية الدراسات العليا في إدارة الأعمال
المحقق المشارك: الدكتور ألبرت حداد
رقم الهاتف: +61402616822
البريد الإلكتروني: albert@leadwise.com.au

قد يتم توجيه أي استفسارات حول مشاركتك في هذا المشروع إلى كبير المحققين المذكور أعلاه.
إذا كان لديك أي استفسارات أو شكاوى حول الطريقة التي تم التعامل بها، يمكنك الاتصال بوزير الأخلاق، لجنة أخلاقيات البحوث الإنسانية بجامعة فيكتوريا، مكتب البحوث، جامعة فيكتوريا، صندوق البريد 14428، ملبورن، مركز فيينا الدولي، 8001، البريد الإلكتروني researchethics@vu.edu.au أو الهاتف (03) 9919 4781 أو 4461.

Appendix 4: Consent Form

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We would like to invite you to be a part of a study into Resilient Leadership: A Study Connecting the Saudi Vision 2030 and Higher Education Sector by participating in the interview.

This study aim is to investigate the presence of resilient leadership among leaders in the Saudi higher education sector towards achieving transformative strategic visions for the country, especially Vision 2030. The higher education in this case will be the public universities in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) which were chosen due to their strategic role in achieving vision 2030 which is the context under which this study is set. The university leaders refer to the people in leadership positions such as deans and heads of departments in the university. The list of these leaders will be obtaining officially from the university management. The study will report the interview findings on approaches to leadership, current challenges and the approaches that can resolve these challenges. Overall, the study aims to contribute to the knowledge on higher education leadership in Saudi Arabia by examining their experiences in higher education leadership. This is more so due to the significance of the higher education leadership, which is facing leadership challenges during this time of change to achieve Vision 2030.

There is no potential risk to participants in this study, which aims only to gather information and experience about the application of resilient leadership in universities. In addition, you will not be affected by participating in the research.

CERTIFICATION BY SUBJECT

I, _____Certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study: Resilient Leadership: A Study Connecting the Saudi Vision 2030 and Higher Education Sector by participating in the interview. It is being conducted at Victoria University by PhD candidate Abdulrahman Al Shamlan.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by Abdulrahman Al Shamlan PhD student.

AND that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- Participating in the interview.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher
The researcher: Abdulrahman Al Shamlan.
Phone: +61417164444 Or Saudi NO: +966531607911
Email: abdulrahman.alshamlan1@live.vu.edu.au
Chief Investigator: Dr Selvi Kannan
Phone: +61 (3) 9919 5374
Email: selvi.kannan@vu.edu.au

Co-investigator: Proof Albert Haddad
Phone: +61402616822
Email: albert@leadwise.com.au

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Translation copy (Arabic)

استمارة الموافقة للمشاركين في البحث

معلومات للمشاركين:

نود أن ندعوكم إلى أن تكونوا جزءاً من دراسة حول القيادة المرنة: دراسة تربط بين رؤية المملكة 2030 وقطاع التعليم العالي من خلال المشاركة في المقابلة

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة استكشاف وجود مهارات القيادة المرنة بين القادة في قطاع التعليم العالي السعودي نحو تحقيق الرؤى الاستراتيجية التحويلية للبلاد، وخاصة رؤية 2030. التعليم العالي في هذه الحالة سيكون الجامعات الحكومية في المملكة العربية السعودية التي تم اختيارها نظراً لدورها الاستراتيجي في تحقيق رؤية 2030 التي هي السياق الذي يتم في ظله إعداد هذه الدراسة. ويشير قادة الجامعة إلى الأشخاص الذين يشغلون مناصب قيادية مثل العمداء ورؤساء الأقسام في الجامعة. وسيتم الحصول على قائمة هؤلاء القادة رسميا من إدارة الجامعة. وستبلغ الدراسة بنتائج المقابلات حول نهج القيادة والتحديات الحالية والنهج التي يمكن أن تحل هذه التحديات. تهدف الدراسة بشكل عام إلى المساهمة في المعرفة بالقيادات في مجال التعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية من خلال دراسة تجاربهم في قيادة التعليم العالي. ويرجع ذلك إلى أهمية قيادة التعليم العالي التي تواجه تحديات القيادة في هذا الوقت من التغيير. ولذلك، فإن هذه الدراسة سوف تقيم معرض وتطبيق جوانب القيادة المرنة (التعامل مع الإجهاد، والروابط المستدامة، والقيادة الذاتية، وعقلية إيجابية) وربطها بتحقيق رؤية 2030.

لا يوجد خطر محتمل على المشاركين في هذه الدراسة، التي تهدف فقط إلى جمع المعلومات والخبرات حول تطبيق القيادة المرنة في الجامعات. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، لن تتأثر بالمشاركة في البحث.

شهادة بالموضوع

أنا ــــــــــــــــــ أشهد بأنني في الثامنة عشرة من عمري على الأقل* وأنني أمنح طواعية موافقتي للمشاركة في الدراسة: القيادة المرنة: دراسة تربط بين رؤية المملكة 2030 وقطاع التعليم العالي من خلال المشاركة في المقابلة. ويجري في جامعة فيكتوريا من قبل المرشح لنيل درجة الدكتوراه عبد الرحمن الشملان.

وأشهد بأن أهداف الدراسة، إلى جانب أي مخاطر وضمانات مرتبطة بالإجراءات المذكورة أدناه التي سيتم تنفيذها في البحث، قد شرحت لي بشكل كامل من قبل طالب الدكتوراه عبد الرحمن ال شملان.

وأنني أوافق بحرية على المشاركة التي تتضمن الإجراءات المذكورة أدناه:

• المشاركة في المقابلة.

وأشهد بأنني أتيحت لي الفرصة للإجابة على أي أسئلة وأنني أفهم أنه يمكنني الانسحاب من هذه الدراسة في أي وقت وأن هذا الانسحاب لن يعرضني للخطر بأي شكل من الأشكال.

لقد تم إبلاغي بأن المعلومات التي أقدمها سوف تبقى سريه.

التوقيع:

تاريخ:

قد يتم توجيه أي استفسارات حول مشاركتك في هذا المشروع إلى الباحث
الباحث: عبدالرحمن الشملان.
رقم الهاتف: +61417164444 أو السعودي: +966531607911
البريد الإلكتروني: abdulrahman.alshamlan1@live.vu.edu.au
كبير المحققين: الدكتورة سيلفي كانان
رقم الهاتف: +61 (3) 9919 5374
البريد الإلكتروني: selvi.kannan@vu.edu.au

المحقق المشارك: الدكتور ألبيرت حداد
رقم الهاتف: +61402616822
البريد الإلكتروني: albert@leadwise.com.au
إذا كان لديك أي استفسارات أو شكاوى حول الطريقة التي تم التعامل بها، يمكنك الاتصال بوزير الأخلاق، لجنة أخلاقيات البحوث الإنسانية بجامعة فيكتوريا Researchethics@vu.edu.au أو الهاتف، مكتب البحوث، جامعة فيكتوريا، صندوق البريد 14428، ملبورن، 8001، البريد الإلكتروني (03) 9919 4781 أو 4461.

Appendix 5: Ethics Committee Approval

Quest Ethics Notification - Application Process Finalised - Application Approved

quest.noreply@vu.edu.au <quest.noreply@vu.edu.au>

Tue 2/23/2021 11:54 AM

To: selvi.kannan@vu.edu.au <selvi.kannan@vu.edu.au>

Cc: Abdulrahman Eidhah F Al Shamlan
<abdulrahman.alshamlan1@live.vu.edu.au>;albert@leadwise.com.au <albert@leadwise.com.au>

Dear DR SELVI KANNAN,

Your ethics application has been formally reviewed and finalised.

» Application ID: HRE20-185
» Chief Investigator: DR SELVI KANNAN
» Other Investigators:
» Application Title: Resilient Leadership: A Study Connecting the Saudi Vision 2030 and Higher
Education Sector
» Form Version: 13-07

The application has been accepted and deemed to meet the requirements of the National Health
and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 'National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human
Research (2007)' by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee. Approval has been
granted for two (2) years from the approval date; 17/02/2021.

Continued approval of this research project by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics
Committee (VUHREC) is conditional upon the provision of a report within 12 months of the above
approval date or upon the completion of the project (if earlier). A report proforma may be
downloaded from the Office for Research website at: http://research.vu.edu.au/hrec.php.

Please note that the Human Research Ethics Committee must be informed of the following: any
changes to the approved research protocol, project timelines, any serious events or adverse and/or
unforeseen events that may affect continued ethical acceptability of the project. In these unlikely
events, researchers must immediately cease all data collection until the Committee has approved
the changes. Researchers are also reminded of the need to notify the approving HREC of changes
to personnel in research projects via a request for a minor amendment. It should also be noted
that it is the Chief Investigators' responsibility to ensure the research project is conducted in line
with the recommendations outlined in the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
'National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).'

On behalf of the Committee, I wish you all the best for the conduct of the project.

Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee
Phone: 9919 4781 or 9919 4461
Email: researchethics@vu.edu.au