Nurturing Entrepreneurial Leadership: An Empirical Study of Elite Schools in Pakistan

Dur-i-Shahwar Aslam Khan[1*], Prof. Dr. Akhtar Ali[2]

Abstract

The main purpose of the current research was to find out the students' perspectives about the various qualities of entrepreneurial leadership developed in the students of Elite schools. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The research population was to be comprised of all students of higher secondary classes studying in grade 11 and grade12 in Elite schools of South Punjab of Pakistan. 400 students of higher secondary section of the sampled schools were selected by using simple random sampling technique. Quantitative data was collected through five-point Likert scale. The collected data was analyzed by using SPSS version 21.0. The simple percentages mean score, independent t-test, and P –values were calculated. Qualitative data obtained from open ended questions was analyzed through thematic approach. The findings revealed that the learning environment of the Elite schools is a contributory factor in developing Entrepreneurial Leadership among the students. Majority of the students are satisfied with the Entrepreneurial Leadership skills developed by these schools. The same model can be applied to other public sector educational institutions of Pakistan.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Leadership, Leadership, Elite Schools, Higher Secondary Schools

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a catalyst to economic growth and societal advancement either through new venture creation or taking place within existing firms. It has led to greater innovation in science and technology, as well as other competitive marketplaces (Li, 2023). And breeds innovation, employment opportunities, and prosperity. However, developing countries often face obstacles such as inadequate financial resources, weak institutional support, and socio-cultural barriers that hinder entrepreneurial activities (Wijayanti et al., 2022). Despite these challenges, promoting an entrepreneurial culture is crucial for sustainable development and economic progress in these regions. Entrepreneurship contributes to poverty reduction by creating employment opportunities and enhancing economic resilience (Amorós et al., 2021) It is crucial for economic development, especially in developing countries like Pakistan, having a large and youthful population. Entrepreneurship holds great potential to leverage its youthful workforce for economic development (Qureshi & Mian, 2018). Research indicates that the rise in entrepreneurial activities can ultimately reduce unemployment levels within Pakistan (Asad et al., 2014). By fostering entrepreneurial activities, Pakistan can generate employment opportunities, stimulate economic growth, and enhance social inclusion.

Entrepreneurship is the process of turning innovative business ideas into reality by identifying and mitigating risks, conducting market analysis, and managing the lifecycle of new ventures. It involves taking personal responsibility for the success or failure of the business (Rosemaro, 2022). Entrepreneurship encourages inclusiveness and innovation, which are two vital components of the socio-economic development agenda for a developing country. Through the inculcation of diversified business ventures, including social entrepreneurship, it can respond to numerous societal issues, encourage innovation, and stimulate economic inclusion within its environments (Kazmi et al., 2016).Entrepreneurship is indeed a combination of various skills and attributes that together enable individuals to identify opportunities, take calculated risks, innovate, and persist through challenges. This blend of characteristics is what empowers entrepreneurs to create and sustain successful ventures (Bateman & Crant, 1993); (Bandura, 1997) (Schumpeter, 1934). Leadership is crucial for entrepreneurship as it drives innovation, fosters business growth, and enhances organizational effectiveness. The need for strong leadership in entrepreneurial ventures is supported by various studies which highlight the impact of leadership behaviors on entrepreneurial success.

Education is a vital foundation in developing the personality and enhancing children's potential. Education is an essential vehicle for knowledge acquisition and career progress when it comes to building and sustaining innovative enterprises and especially entrepreneurship education which can produce the flow of potential entrepreneurs from the education system by nurturing entrepreneurial attributes (Ndofirepi, 2020). Entrepreneurial leadership greatly depends on entrepreneurial education and therefore would influence students' entrepreneurial intentions and self-efficacy, which are also key traits of entrepreneurial leadership (Saeed et al., 2015). Other characteristics of entrepreneurial leadership include being visionary, creative, achievement-oriented, patient, flexible, a risk-taker, persistent, and the ability to motivate others (Hidayah & Rodhiah, 2024). Entrepreneurial leadership is a dynamic

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[1*] PhD Scholar, Department of Education, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan, durishahwarfazal@gmail.com
[2] Former Dean, Faculty of Online and Distance Education, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan, akhtar.ali@iub.edu.pk

and complex social process through which leaders develop their skills in team-based learning activities; this includes peer observation, group-based experiential learning, and self-regulated learning (Ahmed & Harrison, 2022). Entrepreneurial leadership developed through education occurs, for instance, from competencies derived that help in the identification and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities (Renko et al., 2015). Exposure to successful entrepreneurial role models in educational programs increases students' confidence and attitudes towards entrepreneurship, which are crucial for leadership (Boldureanu et al., 2020).This is crucial because educational institutions are instrumental in developing leadership skills among students, thus cultivating the virtues of cooperation, initiative, problem-solving, and effective communication. Personal and professional development happens across fast-changing environments; these competencies are demanded continuously (Bespartochna, 2023). Higher education institutions are also seen to massively develop transferable skills among students, like leadership, with comprehensive leadership programs and capstone courses. Such programs' students are supposed to undertake leading roles in numerous settings that foster empathy, respect, effective communication, and community engagement.(Sivan, Tam, & Chow, 2023).

Entrepreneurship education from an early age has a vital role in developing quality human resources with creative and innovative abilities and other social skills. Entrepreneurship education needs to be implemented from an early age at all levels and types of education, including in elementary schools Badawi (2023). In many parts of world, students are tracked into different types of schools, Elite schools and non-elite schools. These schools systems have their own modes and objectives of education that emphasis different cognitive and behavioral skills among students and are engaged in providing education to the masses. The current study is an attempt to find the contribution of the elite schools in developing the skill of entrepreneurial leadership among the students present in the Southern Punjab of Pakistan

1.1. Research Objectives

Research objectives were:

- To identify various qualities of entrepreneurial leadership developed in the students of elite schools.
- To find out the students opinion about the entrepreneurship and leadership.
- To provide recommendations for enhancing entrepreneurial leadership among students.

1.2. Research Hypotheses

The present research followed these Hypotheses

H_0): There is no significant difference in the entrepreneurial leadership attributes between boarder and non-boarder students of elite schools.

H_1): There is a significant difference in the entrepreneurial leadership attributes (e.g., communication skills, innovation, and self-confidence) between boarder and non-boarder students of elite schools.

2. Literature Review

Leadership is defined as"an influencing process that is aimed at goal achievement by inspiring a team of people to accomplish a predetermined objective (Benmira & Agboola, 2021).Leadership is the art of activating others to struggle for shared ambitions, emphasizing the motivational aspect of leadership (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). It is seen as the process of management by the leader over the led, using power to influence subordinates to achieve organizational goals (Gong, 2022).As it is described as one of the most complex and multidimensional phenomena, involving various attributes and behaviors depending on the context (Wilson, 2022).It is also defined as the approach of encouraging and leading a team towards attaining mutual goals and objectives (Helmold, 2020).

Leadership is a multidimensional theory that involves influencing, motivating, and directing people towards achieving common goals. It encompasses a range of behaviors and processes that vary depending on the context and the specific needs of the organization or group. Leadership behavior, particularly relations-oriented leadership, significantly influences entrepreneurship in public organizations by fostering positive relationships and enhancing innovation (Demircioglu & Chowdhury, 2020). Entrepreneurial leadership is defined as the ability of an individual with authority to utilize power according to their capacity as a leader, emphasizing strength and identity to face dynamic business competition (Dyatmika et al., 2023). Individuals who demonstrate leadership skills in adolescence are more likely to become successful entrepreneurs, suggesting that leadership qualities foster better venture performance and entrepreneurial success. Entrepreneurial leadership integrates the fields of leadership and entrepreneurship, emphasizing the positive effects of combining entrepreneurial traits with traditional leadership skills to drive business success and innovation (Bagheri, A., & Harrison, C. (2020). Strong leadership is essential for entrepreneurship as it enhances innovation, improves business performance, and fosters a positive environment for entrepreneurial ventures to thrive.

Educational institutions are crucial for shaping leadership skills in students, helping them understand the importance of cooperation, initiative, problem-solving, and effective communication. Effective leaders in education motivate

and inspire staff and students, and as a result, educational outcomes will be high and more leaders with leadership traits will be developed (Chkheidze, 2023). There are vast differences between an elite school and a non-elite school, and the purpose, of course, is different in designing academic experiences and opportunities for future studies. Non-elite schools are mostly open to a more varied range of socio-economic backgrounds since the education offered to them is relatively cheaper, and the student body is heterogeneous. Non-elite schools often are pivotal players in their local communities, viewed as an educational involved institution with a mission of local engagement (Sumague, 2023). Non-elite schools have challenges with attaining rigorous academic standards and giving pupils the same degree of preparedness for elite jobs or higher education options since they have fewer resources and assistance (Yang et al., 2023). However, elite schools have a competitive admission process and high tuition fees that have resulted in the inclusion of students with high levels of income. These institutions can offer more cultural capital, which is essential to get social mobility and for entry into the best universities. Students at elite schools often derive advantages in forms of gaining cultural knowledge and networks that are harder to come by for non-elite school students (Shen, 2023). The curriculum and environment in elite schools often emphasize leadership development, critical thinking, and excellence in various fields, preparing students for elite positions in society (Howard & Keddie, 2023).

Elite educational institutions also play a big role in shaping entrepreneurial attributes among students. Most of them pay attention to the development of leading, creative, and networking competencies that are essential for potential success in entrepreneurship. Leadership programs, student organizations, among others, provide a forum where the students may practice making decisions, thinking strategically, managing a team, among other aspects. According to Gianiodis and Meek (2020), elite universities create a leadership trait through their programs that involve aspects of leadership training, mentorship, and active participation in student organizations. The networking with leaders in the industry, alumni, and accomplished entrepreneurs continues to build the entrepreneurship skills. In this scenario, students stand to benefit from valuable connections, experiences, and guidance from experts to possibly point out co-creators or investors.Dada et al. (2023) found that leadership skills are crucial for business startups and management. The study suggests that elite schools should focus on developing leadership attributes through targeted educational programs.

Leadership skills are a critical entrepreneurial attribute fostered by elite schools through structured leadership training and practical experiences. Developing these skills enables students to effectively manage teams and make strategic decisions, which are essential for entrepreneurial success.

3. Research Methodology

The key focus of the current research study was to identify various qualities of entrepreneurial leadership developed in the students of elite schools. Descriptive approach stands on an appropriate option to investigate this complex phenomenon. The research population was to be comprised of all students studying in grade 11 and grade12 of elite boarding schools of southern Punjab. Quantitative data was collected from the 400 students of these schools selected by simple random sampling technique. On the basis of relevant literature view, a self-constructed questionnaire was designed. Questionnaire was allocated into three parts: part 1 contained "demographic information" about the gender, locality. While Part 2 comprised of 13 statements consisting of three factors of entrepreneurial leadership (communication skills, innovation and self-confidence) presented at a five-point Likert response scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" ; part three consisted of an open-ended question, of to get the participants personal views on entrepreneurship, leadership and qualities of leadership promoted by the school. Survey questionnaire was sent to five experts for checking the face and content validity. A pilot test was established by measuring the perception of 20students. However, 379 questionnaires were returned after the final distribution.

4. Quantitative Data Analysis and Findings

The quantitative data was inserted and analyzed by utilizing Statistical Package for Social Science SPSS type 21.0. The simple percentages, mean score and independent t-test were calculated. The result was presented in tabulated form by their total number of frequencies, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-value and significance etc.

Table 1: Students' opinion about the qualities of entrepreneurial leadership

Sr.no	Factors	No of Statements	SA+ A		DA+ SDA		Cronbach's Alpha	Average Mean	% Variance Explained
			f	%	f	%			
1	Communication skills	4	267	70.5	112	29.6	0.945	6.67	12.174
2	Innovation	4	239	63	140	36.9	0.920	6.19	10.059

3	Self confidence	5		256	67.5	123	32.5	0. 924	7.42	13.324
	Cronbach's Alpha	0.975								
	Average Mean	20.28								

Table 1 reveals the factor analysis of the scale that is consisted of thirteen statements and the mean of entrepreneurial leadership quality scale is 20.28 and Cronbach Alpha is .975 which is very good and acceptable for further proceedings. It is shown by this Table that 70.5% students are agreed with the factor of Communication skills having 4 statements with the internal consistency of 0.945 Alpha value and the Average Mean is 6.67. However 63% students are satisfied with factor of Innovation consisted of 4 statements with the Alpha value of 0.920 and the Average Mean is 6.19 .Moreover 67.5% students are satisfied with the factor of Self Confidence having 5 statements and Alpha value is 0.924 and the Average Mean is 7.42.

Table 2: **Residency wise Comparison of the qualities of entrepreneurial leadership**

Factors	Residence						t	sig
	Boarder			Non boarder			value	
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD		
Communication skills	139	24.1871	3.14981	240	22.2625	3.80732	5.043	0.002
Innovation	139	21.9640	2.89530	240	20.5542	2.24568	4.944	0.140
Self confidence	139	40.0576	5.04727	240	36.1167	6.13814	6.416	0.001

Table no 2 represents the difference between the "mean score" of boarding (M=24.18, SD=3.1) and non-boarding (M=22.26, SD= 3.80) students is not high regarding the communication skill. The significant value is not greater than 0.05 t (379)=5.043 Sig=.002 which demonstrates that the variance is significant between the views of boarding and non-boarding scholars about communication skills. However it is represented by the table that the difference between the "mean score" of boarding (M=21.96, SD=2.89) and non-boarding (M=20.55, SD= 2.24) students is also not high regarding the Innovation skill. The significant value is greater than 0.05 t(379)=4.944 Sig=.140 which demonstrates that the difference is not significant between the views of boarding and non-boarding students about the innovation skill of leadership developed by elite school. Table 2 also represents the difference between the "mean score" of boarding (M=40.05, SD=5.04) and non-boarding (M=36.11, SD= 6.13) students which is not high. The significant value is not greater than 0.05 t(379)=6.416 Sig=.001 which demonstrates that the variance is significant between the views of boarding and non-boarding students about the development of the quality of self-confidence in elite school.

5. Qualitative Data Analysis and Findings

As the students were asked to respond the open ended questions that were about their opinion about entrepreneurship, leadership and leadership qualities developed by the school. Following 3 themes were developed through the thematic analysis of the qualitative data.

5.1. Students Perception About The Entrepreneurship

From the students' viewpoint, entrepreneurship is the process of identifying opportunities, taking risks, and creating value through innovation and strategic thinking. They see it as more than just starting a business; it's about problem-solving and bringing new ideas to life. Entrepreneurship involves a blend of creativity, leadership, and resilience, where one must navigate uncertainties and adapt to changing circumstances. Students emphasize the importance of having strong communication skills to pitch ideas and collaborate with others, as well as the ability to make informed decisions and manage resources effectively. They believe that entrepreneurship is a mindset characterized by a proactive approach to challenges, a passion for continuous learning, and the drive to make a meaningful impact in the world.

5.2. Students Perception About The Leadership

Majority of the students agreed that leaders are the people who can mark positive changes on behalf of societies. Some students are of opinion that Leaders can mold the lives of others ultimately. Some are of opinion that leaders are the peoples who have strong and excellent ideas that are appreciated and accepted. Others believes that Leadership is a collaboration that results in positive social change. Leadership is an instrument to achieve goals and as initiation of structure. Leadership is associated with the persons who have a common goal.

Some students' perspective is that leadership is about inspiring and guiding others toward a shared goal while fostering a collaborative and supportive environment. They believe effective leaders demonstrate strong communication skills, ensuring clear and open dialogue among team members. Leadership involves making strategic decisions, taking responsibility, and being adaptable to changing situations. Students emphasize that true leadership is not about authority but about empathy, integrity, and the ability to motivate and empower others. They see leaders as role models who set positive examples, encourage innovation, and create a sense of community. For them, leadership is fundamentally about influencing others positively, nurturing their growth, and driving collective success.

5.3. Students Perception About The Role Of Elite Schools In Developing Leadership Qualities

Majority of students are of opinion that elite schools play a significant role in encouraging and developing entrepreneurial leadership qualities. Some students highlighted the emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving skills through project-based learning and innovation labs, where students are constantly challenged to think creatively and develop practical solutions. Some students appreciate the leadership opportunities provided by the student council and various clubs, which foster decision-making, teamwork, and responsibility. Some student notes the focus on communication skills, enhanced through public speaking workshops and debate clubs, which are crucial for pitching ideas and leading teams. Some students mentions the entrepreneurial mindset cultivated through entrepreneurship programs that teach business planning, market analysis, and risk management, preparing students for real-world challenges. Many of the students values the self-confidence and resilience built through participation in extracurricular activities and mentorship programs, which encourage them to take initiative and persist in the face of setbacks. Together, these experiences develop well-rounded entrepreneurial leaders who are innovative, confident, and capable of driving change.

6. Conclusion and Discussion

The study concluded that elite education strikes to produce impeccable humans besides perfect student. They felt themselves more mature and worldly than many of their peers and there narrative was confident and articulate. A student of an elite school is best equipped to face the challenges of life. He is more knowledgeable, confident and possesses good communication and inter-personal skills. The study revealed that elite schools effectively cultivate essential entrepreneurial leadership qualities such as team spirit, self-confidence, and resilience among students. Leadership and team-building exercises are a regular part of the curriculum, helping students develop strong interpersonal skills and a collaborative mindset. Elite schools foster a culture of innovation and creativity, encouraging students to think critically and take calculated risks in their entrepreneurial endeavors. This present research relates with the findings of Naglo (2020) who studied German elite schools and highlighted that certain values of teamwork, patience, fairness, and respect are encouraged effectively. Elite schools promote entrepreneurial leadership through several key strategies. First, they integrate real-world business scenarios and entrepreneurial projects into the curriculum, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings. Second, these schools emphasize mentorship programs where experienced entrepreneurs guide students, fostering their confidence and resilience. Third, elite schools often provide networking opportunities through events and competitions, enabling students to build connections and gain insights from industry leaders . The study of kurniawan et al., 2023, revealed that practical business involvement in school can enhance students' entrepreneurial skills, including team spirit and self-confidence, through hands-on activities and ethical business practices. Furthermore, research by Wilkins and Comber (2015) shows that career-changers entering teaching bring resilience and self-efficacy, which are critical for effective leadership and classroom success

7. Recommendations

- Evening sessions must be conducted for the deserving students to become effective entrepreneurial Leaders.
- The policies of these schools should be implanted in the government institutions for the betterment of entire country.
- Scholarships should be provided the gifted students.
- The issues and problems faced by the teachers of elite schools should be studied by the prospects researchers.

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