

# The Effectiveness of a Leadership Development Program in Motivating Saudi Women to Set Up Small Projects

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**Abstract—** The current study aimed to reveal the effectiveness of a leadership development program designed to motivate Saudi women to establish small projects, using the observation card and applying it to a sample of them engaged in such projects. Average scores of women working in new small and medium enterprises in the Kingdom in the two applications before and after the performance observation card are related to leadership skills. There is a statistically significant correlation at the level of significance ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) between the scores of Saudi women. As a whole, this study recommended an increase in training programs for women to promote small projects; thus, the goals of empowering women as stipulated in the Kingdom's 2030 Vision are realized.

**Keywords—** leadership skills, Saudi women, small projects.

## I. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that successful leadership is one of the most important elements of all kinds of work and the cornerstone for its success. In all institutions with different types and sizes, leadership, in its simple meaning, is the leader's ability to achieve subordinate goals with their help, while maintaining a strong belief in the value of doing so. Therefore, the importance of leadership, in general, is the leader's ability to shape and explain the actions of ordinary and talented individuals, inspiring them to strive for excellence.

The role of leadership does not stop at supervision and direction; instead, leaders usually look forward to fulfilling great missions at the top of their ladder of responsibility for making decisions that achieve goals and then monitoring their implementation. As a result, achievement is made and various skills of individuals are progressed. Leadership is concerned with the element of communication and information exchange, [1].

The practice of leadership in large organizations may differ greatly from that in medium and small enterprises. This is because, as an institution grows in size and expands its activities, the organizational relations that depend on regulations and systems become more influential and have control over the course of work.

The matter is different in small enterprises or projects that are still under development and seek to have a place in the labor and production market, and this becomes more urgent in the case of the state's tendency to encourage women to engage in the field of small projects. The establishment of these projects requires qualified women leaders to ensure their success.

Hence, the current study is heading towards revealing the efficacy of a training leadership program to motivate Saudi women to start small projects.

Leadership, not management, is the backbone of success in managing projects, regardless of their size, which is indicated in the results of many studies. These studies also showed the clear impact of leadership on improving the performance of human resources, including, [2], [3]. The direct influence of job performance was revealed in a study by [4]. In the same context, the results of the survey conducted by the researchers highlighted that Saudi women involved in the field of small projects needed more training and rehabilitation programs to provide them with leadership skills.

Hence, the current research emphasizes the significance of developing leadership skills through a training program prepared for this purpose. The problem of the current study is crystallized in answering a main question: To what extent is a leadership development program for motivating Saudi women to set up small projects crucial? A subquestion emerges from the main one as follows:

Is there a statistically significant difference between the average scores of Saudi women who are engaged in new small and medium enterprises in the two applications of the performance note card?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *The Concept of Leadership*

Leadership is the heart and soul of management which involves the mutual influence between the leaders and subordinates to achieve organizational goals, [5]. Scholars presented different definitions for leadership, [6]. For instance, it is interpreted as a process of influencing the behavior of others to reach common and desired goals, [7]. In addition, the leader can persuade and influence individuals to fulfill their duties and tasks that contribute to reaching the group's common goal, [8]. Lastly, the study, [9], comes in agreement with the abovementioned studies.

### B. *The Importance of Leadership*

According to [10], the importance of leadership is as follows:

- It is not possible to develop a complete, comprehensive, and clear design for an organization and its objectives, such as preparing policies, setting instructions and regulations, and applying them in practice, unless there is effective leadership that addresses these gaps in implementation.
- Due to the quick changes and advances occurring today, an organization that is unable to adapt to its surroundings becomes vulnerable to challenges, failure, and demise. In this situation, leadership plays an important role to make the organization respond to these changes around it.
- Just as the external environment has an impact on the organization that requires change and adaptation, the internal environment of the organization has a role in bringing about change and development. Thus, it is recommended to increase activities and jobs, which calls for modification in building the organization. In addition, several measures should be undertaken to escalate coordination and balance of the organization's branches and units, which necessitates effective leadership to do so.
- The human factor is considered one of the key factors to recognize leadership in an organization. Every individual has his/her motives, tendencies, trends, and interests that make them distinguishable; the individual's affiliation with a group may require him/her to do things that may conflict with the goals of the organization. These matters are reflected in the behavior of employees, so appropriate measures should be executed with effective leadership to confront this and accomplish cooperation.

### C. *The Main Reasons for the Existence of a Leader*

- The importance of teamwork and its good results is compared to individual efforts in terms of interaction, dealing, and the conditional understanding between the leader and his/her workers.
- The positive impact stands for encouraging and motivating the employees to exert their maximum possible efforts and obtain outstanding performance and innovation.
- The leader can improve by applying his/her new ideas and operational procedures. The leadership process facilitates the

organization to achieve the set goals, [7]. Leadership supports positive behavior and reduces negatives, as the leader acts as the captain of the ship, [11], who controls and solves work problems, resolving differences and weighing opinions.

### D. *The Functions of the Leader*

Based on a study by [12], the functions of the leader are the crystallization and identification of goals by determining the ways and means by which the objectives are achieved, facilitating and strengthening the interactions and work of the group, assisting the group in accomplishing members' tasks, and gaining members' satisfaction and group cohesion.

### E. *Leadership Skills*

- Technical skills require the availability of information, knowledge, and scientific assets related to the field and nature of work, and conceptual skills mean recognizing problems and visualizing how to solve them. This is performed through inventing ideas and analyzing the facts and results, which leads to making appropriate decisions.
- Human skills refer to his/her ability to interact and deal successfully with subordinates to support them in attaining the desired goals and acquiring psychological satisfaction for them, [13].
- Self-skills are the leader's reaction to the situations that confront him and how to successfully manage them in the best way to reach the best results. Also, relationship skills boost the enthusiasm of subordinates to work and interact with each other. Therefore, the leader's vision is met through his/her influence on others.
- Strategic thinking skills are defined as the capacity to feature the steps necessary to catch the desired goal.
- Systematic thinking skills are used by the leader to understand and define the problem area, then form an effective work team, [14].

### F. *Previous Studies*

- A study by [2], measured the role of leadership skills in improving the performance of human resources, by following the descriptive analytical approach and applying a questionnaire to a random sample of 35 workers, representing 30% of the total community. It represented the president's participation in successful leadership, instilling high confidence in employees and encouraging them to work collectively, providing guidance and taking responsibility for decisions, and contributing to solving problems.
- The study, [15], identified the role of leadership training programs in enhancing leadership skills among Palestinian youth who participate in leadership development programs. The results of the study showed that the role of training leaders in preparation programs rose to 75.121%.
- The study, [3], tested the different impacts of administrative leadership styles on human resources performance. It concluded that the three styles existed in the organization in varying degrees with a noticeable dominance of the democratic style compared to autocratic and free

theories, which were reflected positively in the performance of individuals in the institution.

- A study by [4], examined the impact of administrative leadership with its three variables on the job performance of workers, as well as personal variables on workers' responses. It concluded that there was a positive, statistically significant relationship between administrative leadership with its three variables and the level of job performance.

- A study by [16], explored the impact of the leadership skills program on the creativity of outstanding students in the Kingdom of Bahrain, after passing a training program in leadership skills and identifying gender differences. The study was conducted on two groups of gifted students in the third grade of secondary school. They were randomly tested, and the results of the study pinpointed that there were statistically significant differences in leadership skills between the two groups, which indicated that the trainees' leadership skills were higher than those of the control group.

- The study, [17], on the effectiveness of the leadership development program in self-awareness described the changes in behaviors as reported by the trainees after participating in the program. Through handling online interviews and implementing a structured interview protocol, participants' responses on the behavioral changes were elicited. It concluded that there was a noticeable impact of leadership development programs on female trainees.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. The Study Population

The study population is determined by all working and nonworking Saudi women in the field of small and medium enterprises. The sample of the study was a deliberate one of them, who represented 27% of the lowest quarter of leadership skills (40 women), during the period from 1/5/2021 to 31/9/2021.

#### B. The Research Tools

The study tools represented in the performance note card encompassed 53 phrases, divided into the following axes: employee motivation (5) phrases, time management (10) phrases, social interaction (7) phrases, negotiation (7) phrases, problem-solving (7) phrases, controlling emotions (6) phrases, self-control (5) phrases, and decision-making (6) phrases.

Validity: it is confirmed by construct validity, which symbolizes internal consistency, by finding Pearson's correlation coefficient between the degree of each phrase and its dimension. This sparked a positive correlation at the level of significance (0, 01), which emphasizes the validity of the tools. Reliability: it was calculated by using Cronbach's alpha method, whose value reached 0.847. Consequently, it is a high and acceptable value affirming the consistency and reliability of the tools. Tool correction: the search tools were corrected according to the Likert quintet scale by selecting one of multiple (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, disagree, and strongly disagree) in each of the questionnaire phrases,

corrected on a scale of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 for positive phrases and of one, two, three, four, and 5 for negative phrases.

#### 1) The General Objective of the Training Program

- Familiarity with cognitive skills is necessary to activate the role of women as effective leaders of small projects.
- Mastery of several professional skills is required to promote the project work towards achieving the planned goals.
- Providing the trainees with general skills qualifies them to engage in the labor market and entrepreneurship.

#### 2) The Techniques Used in the Training Program

There are a set of techniques employed by researchers during the various sessions of the program, which combined reinforcement, modeling, and lectures, as follows:

- Enhancing leadership skills: reinforcement process involves rewarding the appropriate behavior when it appears in a way that encourages future occurrences of the same behaviour, [18]. It sheds light on Saudi women's leadership skills through tribal measurement.

- Modeling leadership skills: modeling, as one of the methods of teaching and acquiring skills, plays an essential role in acquiring the required behaviors, [19].

The modeling work represented in the proposed program helps to establish the mechanisms for dealing with each of the leadership positions.

- Lectures and group discussions: these are considered one of the training methods, in which the element of learning and relearning plays a major role since it depends on giving lectures and is interspersed with discussions aimed at changing trends, [20].

Homework: this idea of assignment elevates women's leadership skills, such as scientific research or exploring entrepreneurship opportunities.

#### 3) List of Targeted Skills

The target skills of the training program are extracted based on the list of leadership skills prepared by the researchers, which consists of the following. The skill of motivating employees: this is represented in listening to their opinions. Time management skill: this means focusing on planning work, carrying out tasks on time, having flexibility in organization, and believing in the importance of time and its good use. Social interaction skill: this is mirrored in social relations, keenness on normal relations, social personality, and helping others. Negotiation skills and acceptance of others' opinions: this is reflected in the lack of fanaticism and persuasion, collecting employees' ideas. Problem-solving skill: it refers to understanding and assimilating the aspects of a problem. Effective communication: it is represented in the diversity of ways to solve problems, collect and classify information, and benefit from the opinions and experiences of others.

The skill of controlling emotions: It embodies controlling anger and feelings, accepting different opinions, tolerance, and calm. Self-control skill: stands for the presence of values, principles, goals, determination, and strength to act wisely and overcome anger.

Decision-making skill: it is explained by the ability to

choose the best decision, think and wait before acting, and gain insight from one’s experiences and professional judgment.

4) *Program Implementation Mechanisms*

The training program was managed as follows:

A total of 12 meetings over a period of three months, with one meeting per week, were held via a remote communication system due to the circumstances of the Corona pandemic.

- The sample was made up of Saudi women working on small projects who face motivation difficulties and realize the importance of leadership in the success of the project’s idea.

- Simulation methods of leadership positions were adopted to deliver the training target for the study sample. The research used a pre- and post-experimental design with one experimental group not obliging their reorganization and distribution. The procedural steps for this method are summarized in the following, [21]. The chart flow of our program implementation is presented in Figure 1.

G1Pr1 .....X1 ..... Pt1



Figure 1. Chart flow

- A pretest was conducted on the group, before introducing the independent variable into the experiment.
- The independent variable was run as determined and controlled by the researcher, to bring about certain changes in the dependent variable that could be observed and measured.
- A posttest was exploited to measure the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.
- Thus, the significance of the differences between the premeasurement and the postmeasurement is calculated.
- The adjusted earning percentage in black to study the effectiveness of the training program is also estimated.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *The Variations in Average Levels of Women Working in New Small and Medium Enterprises in the Kingdom in the Tribal and Remote Applications: The Skill of Motivating Workers*

TABLE 1. THE VARIATIONS IN AVERAGE LEVELS OF WOMEN WORKING IN NEW SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN THE KINGDOM IN THE TRIBAL AND REMOTE APPLICATIONS: THE SKILL OF MOTIVATING WORKERS.

Application	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	T	Sig	Blake ratio
Before	7.71	1.60	153	82.575	.000	1.224
After	20.22	1.30				

It is clear from the previous table that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of women

working in new small and medium enterprises in the Kingdom in the tribal and remote applications of the skill of motivating workers, in favor of the post-application (153).

B. *The Variations in the Average Levels of Women Working in New Small and Medium Enterprises in the Kingdom in the Tribal and Remote Applications: the Skill of Time Management*

TABLE 2. THE VARIATIONS IN THE AVERAGE LEVELS OF WOMEN WORKING IN NEW SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN THE KINGDOM IN THE TRIBAL AND REMOTE APPLICATIONS: THE SKILL OF TIME MANAGEMENT.

Application	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	T	Sig	Blake ratio
Before	11.10	2.10	153	90.558	.000	1.663
After	47.49	4.72				

There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of women working in new small and medium enterprises in the Kingdom in the pre-and post-applications of time management skills, in favor of the post-application (153).

C. *The Variations in Average Levels of Women Working in New Small and Medium Enterprises in the Kingdom in the Tribal and Remote Applications: the Skill of Social Interaction*

TABLE 3. THE VARIATIONS IN AVERAGE DEGREES OF WOMEN WORKING IN NEW SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN THE KINGDOM IN THE TRIBAL AND REMOTE APPLICATIONS: THE SKILL OF SOCIAL INTERACTION.

Application	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	T	Sig	Blake ratio
Before	10.86	2.98	153	88.381	.000	1.439
After	31.42	1.92				

There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of women working in new small and medium enterprises in the Kingdom in the tribal and remote applications of the social interaction skill, in favor of the post-application (153).

D. *The Variations in Average Degrees of Women Engaged in New Small and Medium Enterprises in the Kingdom in the Tribal and Remote Applications: the Skill of Negotiation*

TABLE 4. THE VARIATIONS IN THE AVERAGE DEGREES OF WOMEN ENGAGED IN NEW SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN THE KINGDOM IN THE TRIBAL AND REMOTE APPLICATIONS: THE SKILL OF NEGOTIATION.

Application	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	T	Sig	Blake ratio
Before	12.42	1.51	153	98.206	.000	1.255
After	29.64	1.52				

It is clear from the previous table that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of women working in new small and medium enterprises in the Kingdom in the pre-and post-applications of negotiation skills, in favor of the post-application (153).

*E. The Variations in Average Degrees of Women Engaged in New Small and Medium Enterprises in the Kingdom in the Tribal and Remote Applications: the Skill of Problem-Solving*

TABLE 5. THE VARIATIONS IN THE AVERAGE DEGREES OF WOMEN ENGAGED IN NEW SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN THE KINGDOM IN THE TRIBAL AND REMOTE APPLICATIONS: THE SKILL OF PROBLEM-SOLVING.

Application	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	T	Sig	Blake ratio
Before	12.59	1.39	153	84.399	.000	1.387
After	31.54	2.73				

The findings revealed a significant difference between the mean scores of women engaged in new small and medium enterprises in the Kingdom concerning problem-solving skills, in favor of the post-application. The value of “t” reached 84,399, which is a statistically significant value at the level of 0.05 at the degree of freedom (153).

*F. The Variations in Average Degrees of Women Involved in New Small and Medium Businesses in the Kingdom in the Tribal and Remote Applications: the Skill of Impulse Control*

TABLE 6. THE VARIATIONS IN AVERAGE DEGREES OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN NEW SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN THE KINGDOM IN THE TRIBAL AND REMOTE APPLICATIONS: THE SKILL OF IMPULSE CONTROL.

Application	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	T	Sig	Blake ratio
Before	11.73	1.25	153	110.751	.000	1.597
After	29.86	1.30				

It is apparent from the previous table that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of women involved in new small and medium businesses in the Kingdom in the tribal and remote applications of the skill of controlling emotions, in favor of the post-application at the degree of freedom (153).

*G. The Variations in Average Degrees of Women Involved in New Small and Medium Businesses in the Kingdom in the Tribal and Remote Applications: the Skill of Self-Adjusting*

TABLE 7. THE VARIATIONS IN AVERAGE DEGREES OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN NEW SMALL AND MEDIUM BUSINESSES IN THE KINGDOM IN THE TRIBAL AND REMOTE APPLICATIONS: THE SKILL OF SELF-ADJUSTING.

Application	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	T	Sig	Blake ratio
Before	11.93	1.18	153	114.232	.000	1.177
After	22.03	1.07				

There is a statistically significant difference between the average scores of women involved in new small and medium businesses in the Kingdom in the tribal and remote applications of the skill of motivating workers, in favor of the post-application (153).

*H. The Variations in the Average Levels of Women Working in New Small and Medium Enterprises in the Kingdom in the Tribal and Remote Applications: Decision-Making Skill*

TABLE 8. THE VARIATIONS IN AVERAGE LEVELS OF WOMEN WORKING IN NEW SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN THE KINGDOM IN THE TRIBAL AND REMOTE APPLICATIONS: DECISION-MAKING SKILL.

Application	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	T	Sig	Blake ratio
Before	11.56	0.94	153	214.807	.000	1.545
After	29.21	0.41				

There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of women working in new small and medium enterprises in the Kingdom in the two applications regarding the decision-making skill, in favor of the post-application (153).

*I. The Variations in the Average Levels of Women Contributing to New Small and Medium Enterprises in the Kingdom in the Tribal and Remote Applications: Leadership Skills as a Whole*

TABLE 9. THE VARIATIONS IN AVERAGE LEVELS OF WOMEN CONTRIBUTING TO NEW SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN THE KINGDOM IN THE TRIBAL AND REMOTE APPLICATIONS: LEADERSHIP SKILLS AS A WHOLE.

Application	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	T	Sig	Blake ratio
Before	89.91	4.83	153	239.075	.000	1.437
After	241.42	6.46				

The results identified a significant difference between the average scores of women contributing to new small and medium enterprises in the Kingdom in the tribal and remote applications of leadership skills to motivate them to set up small projects (as a whole), in favor of the dimensional application. The “t” test reached 239,075, which is the value of significant difference at the level of 0.05 at the degree of freedom (153).

Moreover, it is depicted that the percentage of the adjusted gain in the pre-and post-application of the performance observation card amounted to 1.437, which is an acceptable value because it is greater than the correct one. Therefore, it can be said that leadership development programs are characterized by an acceptable degree of effectiveness with regard to motivating Saudi women to set up small projects since it achieves a gain rate (black constant) greater than 1.02.

*J. The Correlation between the Scores of Saudi Women Working in New Small and Medium Enterprises on the Performance Note Card Related to Leadership Skills*

A significant positive correlation at the level of 0.01 was illustrated between the scores of Saudi women working in new small and medium enterprises on the performance note card related to leadership skills.

TABLE 10. THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE SCORES OF SAUDI WOMEN WORKING IN NEW SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES ON THE PERFORMANCE NOTE CARD RELATED TO LEADERSHIP SKILLS.

Skill	Motivating employees	Time management	Social interaction	Negotiation	Problem-solving	Impulse control	Self-adjusting	Decision-making	Leadership skills (as a whole)
Motivating employees									
Time management	.227*								
Social interaction	.120*	.147*							
Negotiation	.472*	.128*	.580**						
Problem-solving	.214**	.281*	.222**	.602**					
Impulse control	.284**	.213**	.260**	.205*	.166*				
Self-adjusting	.304**	.269**	.559**	.533**	.111*	.454**			
Decision-making	.114*	.540**	.326*	.311*	.311**	.322**	.551**		
Leadership skills (as a whole)	.222**	.159*	.179*	.283**	.419**	.175*	.225*	.380**	

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusion

The current study mainly aimed to unveil the effectiveness of the training program directed to the study sample of working and non-working women in small projects in the Kingdom. This is carried out to inspire them in entering the field of small projects. Through a tribal and remote measurement and analysis of the study’s results, we found the following:

The program had clear and tangible effectiveness in developing women’s leadership skills needed to manage small projects, whether looking at the overall level of skills combined or for each skill separately.

The reality of women working on small projects was connected to the degree of leadership skills of each of them, which was described by analyzing the relationship between their degrees on the performance note card.

In summary, the outcomes of the current study agree with those of [15], [16], [17], [22], all of which proved the effectiveness of leadership development programs in accomplishing the desired goals.

B. Recommendations

It is highly recommended to elevate training programs directed at women to promote working on small projects; hence, women’s empowerment goals stipulated in the Kingdom’s 2030 Vision are realized. Conducting scientific studies is needed to determine the technical skills required to set up small projects of all kinds. The execution of specialized training programs helps develop technical skills for women who wish to establish small projects and who possess the necessary leadership skills.

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### **Contribution of individual authors to the creation of a scientific article (ghostwriting policy)**

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