ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP IN THE UNIVERSITY CONTEXT: REALITY OR MYTH? EVIDENCE FROM PAKISTAN

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the phenomena of entrepreneurial leadership in the context of Pakistani universities in an attempt to justify its role, value and applicability. In general, entrepreneurial leaders are vital to successful transformation of traditional universities into entrepreneurial ones. A comparative case study approach was adopted whereby 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted in six public and private universities. This study reveals that entrepreneurial leadership (EL) works at the operational level of university hierarchy instead of a top down approach. A ‘university push model’ is found more effective than a ‘government pull model’ whereby we propose a conceptual model indicating entrepreneurial orientation as prerequisite for creating entrepreneurial culture for the development of EL. Challenges are addressed to the implementation of EL in different sectors. The research contributes to our knowledge of entrepreneurial leadership, especially in the Pakistani context, where little real effort has been made so far.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial leadership (EL), entrepreneurial orientation (EO), culture, operational leadership, organisational change, university, Pakistan.

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Introduction

The role of universities has increasingly become central to the knowledge transfer from conventional research to its practical and commercial applications. This has led many governments and industries of the world to expect more outputs from their universities in addition to teaching and research, and to play an active role in the economic development of their countries, through pursuing the “Third Task” of knowledge transfer (Laukkanen, 2003, p372). This is addressed in the Triple Helix Model (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 1996) where the universities interacting with the industry drive the knowledge economy. This has put higher education universities under growing demands especially considering that in most cases, the government budget for universities is actually decreasing, depending upon the whims of the political parties in power as they try to deal with increasing competition for national resources between universities with other government organizations such as the military, hospitals, emergency services, etc. (Clark, 1998). This raises the question on how these universities can transform their management and systems to be more effective and competitive.

The role of leadership in organisational change has grown in importance; an increasing number of researchers are advocating the concept of entrepreneurship within organizations as a means of solving the increasing problems of today’s bureaucratic, hierarchical and inefficient organizations (Morris and Jones, 1999; Boyett, 1996; Kuratko, 2007; Fernald et al., 2005; Kuratko and Hornsby, 1998). However, there is an on-going debate whether entrepreneurial leadership and mindset is appropriate or even possible in the university context. Whilst universities may be well suited to producing high quality research outputs and qualified graduates, some literature has suggested that they are poor platforms for entrepreneurial aspirations as many academic disciplines may be unsuited to undertake hard entrepreneurial activities, such as spin-off company formation and commercialization of technology (Agrawal and Henderson, 2002; Povoa and Rapini,
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2010). It is suggested that the university should not promote the entrepreneurial culture at the cost of losing its traditional role and values (BankBoston, 1997). However, other views stress that the growing shift to developing hard entrepreneurial activities in universities is unlikely to be reversed in the near future due to economic, legal and financial pressures and changes happening as a global phenomenon (see Philpott et al, 2011; Etzkowitz et al, 2000). Universities in general have to have entrepreneurial spirit for the very purpose of knowledge creation, propagation and application.

The objective of this study therefore, is to examine the concept of entrepreneurial leadership (EL) and orientation (EO) at different levels of operation in both public and private universities. How to justify the role of entrepreneurial leadership in a changing university context? To which extent entrepreneurial leadership is developed and applicable in Pakistani universities? What are the challenges for the development of effective entrepreneurial leadership? These are some of the questions that motivate this research. The remainder of the paper is organised as follows. We present an extensive review of EL and EO literature. Next is a description of unique context of Pakistan. This is followed by Methodology section. Separate findings of public and private universities are presented afterwards. The conclusion sums up the paper. In the end, there is a note on limitation and future direction.

**Review of Literature**

**Entrepreneurial Leadership**

There are numerous studies to explore the concept of ‘entrepreneurial leadership’ in modern organizations (Zerbinati and Souitaris, 2004; Gupta et al., 2004, Tarabishy et al., 2005; Currie et al., 2008). In general, these studies have explored how traditional hierarchical organizations can apply the entrepreneurial leadership and orientation into their existing organizational infrastructure to make
them more responsive to internal and external changes. According to these researchers, organizations should embrace an entrepreneurial mind-set throughout all the levels of these organizations so that they may become more tolerant of risk-taking, giving rise to novel and innovative ideas, allowing them to adopt a more proactive strategic approach towards external changes and opportunities. ‘Entrepreneurial universities’ was a term coined by Etzkowitz (1983) to refer to such universities whose management and leadership adopt a more entrepreneurial stance to increase their entrepreneurial orientation so as to better deal with the increasing demands and to more actively contribute to the economic development. Establishing entrepreneurial leadership hence becomes a pre-requisite for increasing a university’s entrepreneurial orientation. An organization can become more entrepreneurially oriented when its employees’ entrepreneurial behaviour increases (Lau, et al. 2012). Leadership is important in organisational change process because of the effective way leaders and managers influence others to follow change. It is an essential aspect of any organization and especially when it comes to entrepreneurship. If organizations are to raise their entrepreneurial orientation then they must back it up with leadership that should be entrepreneurially thinking. It is essential for incorporating entrepreneurship within organizations and many are realizing the need for entrepreneurial leadership to make the entrepreneurship process happen (Kuratko, and Hornsby, 1998; Fernald et al. 2005; Fitzsimmons et al. 2005).

Although a number of authors have studied entrepreneurial universities and state that entrepreneurial leadership is indispensable to such universities seeking to become more entrepreneurial, see for example O’Shea et al. (2007), Etzkowitz (2003), Clark (2001), but little is known on how such leadership creates and supports an entrepreneurial culture within these universities’ structure and systems. Furthermore, prior studies on entrepreneurial leadership are highly skewed towards the western and developed countries where most of empirical research have been conducted, see for example O’Shea et al. (2007), Jacob et al.
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Entrepreneurial leadership is inherently related to the entrepreneurship process within organizations and to increasing entrepreneurial orientation. Some authors like McGrath and MacMillan (2000) advocate incorporating an entrepreneurial mind-set as a basic element of strategic management, which is why the focus on entrepreneurial leadership is so important (Gupta et al., 2004). Leadership is an essential aspect of any organization. It provides vision, generates goals, objectives and strategy for achieving that vision, and gives rise to organizational culture. It is reflected in all essential activities of a firm. This is especially true when it comes to entrepreneurship within organizations. If organizations are to raise their entrepreneurial orientation then they must back it up with leadership which should be entrepreneurial. It is essential for incorporating entrepreneurship within organizations and many companies today are realizing the need for entrepreneurial leadership (Kuratko, and Hornsby, 1998). Fitzsimmons et al. (2005) also stress that underlying corporate entrepreneurship is entrepreneurial leadership and intrapreneurial managerial behaviour within the firm.

Fernald, et al., posit that in addition to common leadership functions, entrepreneurial leaders have to deal with concepts and ideas that are not of organizational nature (El-Namaki, 1992 as cited in Fernald et al., 2005). These include vision, problem-solving, decision-making, risk-taking, and strategic initiatives; that is ‘a leader has to be entrepreneurial as well’ (Fernald et al., 2005, p.3). During the review of literature for the concept of entrepreneurial leadership, the following
definitions came to surface. They have been organized in the following table I:

**Table I:**

Various Definitions of Entrepreneurial Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision, Creativity and Risk</td>
<td>Gupta et al. (2004)</td>
<td>Leadership that creates visionary scenarios that are used to assemble and mobilize a supporting cast of participants who become committed by the vision to the discovery and exploitation of strategic value-creation.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kuratko and Hodgetts (2007)</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial Leadership is a dynamic process of vision, change, and creation. It requires an application of energy and passion towards the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions. Essential ingredients include the willingness to take calculated risks - in terms of time, equity, or career; the ability to formulate an effective venture team; the creative skill to marshal the needed resources; the fundamental skill of building a solid business plan; and, finally, the vision to recognize opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction, and confusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fernald et al. (2005) as in Nor Iskandar Mohd Nor</td>
<td>Leaders that are visionary, risk-takers, persistent, patient, flexible, creative, achievement-oriented and able to motivate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation, Risk and Proactivity</td>
<td>Currie et al. (2008)</td>
<td>An entrepreneurial leader is one who is able to, or encourages others to, identify and exploit opportunities while showing evidence of innovativeness, risk-taking and pro-activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Leadership, and Developing and Managing (Entrepreneurial) Organizations (in terms of culture, resources, problem solving, etc.)</td>
<td>Swiercz and Ljden (2002)</td>
<td>Defines entrepreneurial leaders as individuals who initiate, develop and manage entrepreneurial organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ireland et al. (2003)</td>
<td>The ability to influence others to manage resources strategically in order to emphasize both opportunity-seeking and advantage-seeking behaviors.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kuratko and Hodgetts (2007)</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial leadership can be defined as leadership that has the ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically, and work with others to initiate changes that will create a viable future for the organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ireland and Hill, 1999</td>
<td>Leadership that determines a firm's purpose or vision, exploits and maintains core competencies, develops human capital, sustains an effective organizational culture, emphasizes ethical practices, and establishes balanced organizational controls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fernald et al. (2005)</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial leadership involves strategic leadership, problem-solving skills, timely decision-making, a willingness to accept risks, and good negotiating skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Brooker (2005)</td>
<td>Describes entrepreneurial leaders as those moving beyond an adaptive response to change that is framed by existing practice in order to enact a pioneering, imaginative and more creative leadership.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors’ constructed
In analysing the above definitions of the concept of the entrepreneurial leadership, a number of themes emerge, which are: Creativity, Risk-taking, Strategic leadership, Vision creation, Pro-activity, Change, Innovation, and Organizational management. Of these, vision, creativity, and change etc. are common to both entrepreneurial leadership and other leadership theories in general. On the other hand innovation, risk-taking, and pro-activity are the fundamental characteristics of entrepreneurship, and hence entrepreneurial leadership. So in addition to common leadership functions such as vision, creativity, change, strategic leadership, etc., entrepreneurial leaders have to deal with additional concepts and ideas that are not of organizational nature (such as innovation) (El-Namaki, 1992 as cited in Fernald et al., 2005). Hence this study proposes the following definition of entrepreneurial leadership: ‘Entrepreneurial leadership is that leadership which gives rise to, paves the way for, and increases the entrepreneurial orientation of an organization by encouraging and supporting others in carrying out the leadership functions and in being more innovative, risk-taking, and proactive.’

**Entrepreneurial Orientation**

Underlying entrepreneurship within organizations is the concept of Entrepreneurial Orientation. It is considered that entrepreneurially-oriented firms differ from the other types of firms. It can be defined as the methods, processes, practices, and decision-making activities of firms that may allow them to be entrepreneurial in pursuit of new opportunities, gaining market share, and competing with competitors in the market (Lumpkin, and Dess, 1996, p.136). The main key dimensions through which the firms attempt this are: innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness that were put forth by Miller, and Friesen (1983) based on the prior work of Khandwalla (1977) (Covin and Selvin, 1991; Kuratko, 2007). A growing body of evidence from research on entrepreneurial orientation such as Stevenson and Jarillo (1990), Brown et al. (2001), Moreno, and Casillas (2008), Zahara and Covin (1995), Wiklund and Shepherd (2005), Kreiser, Marino, and Weaver (2002), Miller and Friesen (1983), Khandwalla (1977), and Mintzberg (1973) suggests that entrepreneurial firms tend to take more risks as compared to other firms, and such firms
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Entrepreneurial leadership involves organizations that proactively search for new business opportunities, and are distinguished by a strong emphasis on innovation. Some authors, e.g. Morris (1998) and Lee and Peterson (2000), even assert that entrepreneurial orientation is crucial for the high growth of firms, survival of companies and economic development of countries. Such organizations would proactively and aggressively compete with others by innovating on a regular basis, while taking considerable risks, to gain a competitive market advantages.

The Context of the Study

The context of Pakistan differs considerably in terms of its culture, socio-economic, and political conditions to those of the other countries where prior studies on entrepreneurial leadership were carried out. The culture of Pakistan is characterised by inequality in distribution of power in organizations and this inequality is endorsed by leaders and followers alike. Furthermore its culture prefers explicit rules and formally structured activities and employees stay with their organizations considerably longer as compared to countries with low uncertainty avoidance such as England, America, and Australia. Pakistani culture also prefers collectivism and does not encourage individualism. Furthermore the culture is a short-term oriented: where immediate goals are more preferred as compared to long-term goals and saving face is the primary aim. Scores of high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance are characteristic of societies that highly regard laws, rules, regulations, and controls to reduce the amount of uncertainty. These cultures are more likely to follow a caste system that does not allow significant upward mobility of its citizens. In such a situation leaders have virtually ultimate power and authority, and the rules, regulations and laws are developed by those in power with no consideration for employee’s participation. These leaders reinforce their own leadership and control. In short such cultural conditions are not conducive for entrepreneurial leadership. In fact the literature suggests that the conditions which facilitate entrepreneurial leadership of an organization are a more autonomous structure with less reliance on control and authority (Kuratko et al. 2005) where greater emphasis
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is on employee participation and initiative from below in the setting of goals and contributing to organizations adopting an entrepreneurial stance (Woods et al. 2004). Therefore, it can be inferred that the larger cultural context of Pakistan is not favourable for entrepreneurial leadership within its organizations. However, culture is not something static; it is constantly changing, particularly in today’s rapidly changing global environments, internationalization and convergence (Hofstede, 2007).

The economic situation of Pakistan is declining and unstable. According to the State of Pakistan Competitiveness report (2011), in 2011 Pakistan’s ranking on the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Index fell from 101 to 123. This has placed Pakistan ahead of approximately 12% of the countries listed, down from 25% in the previous year. Critical areas of decline were largely related to macroeconomic policy, human resources, infrastructure and institutions. According to the report the major areas of concern for the country are the deteriorating security situation, lack of investment in the people, and the declining business environment, which are greatly affecting Pakistan’s competitiveness.

Methodology

Research Design

A qualitative case-study approach was utilised for this study. The choice of the research methodology was made on the basis of the research problem, the literature review, and some practical considerations of the place and context where the study was carried out. The research problem is of exploratory nature and is contextually bound. It is the first of its kind to be conducted in the context of Pakistan and differs considerably from the western countries where most prior studies were conducted. Qualitative research design is, by its nature and assumptions, more suited to a study which is context based, as compared to a quantitative study (Creswell, 2009; Bryman and Bell, 2009; Bryman, 1988). Furthermore the phenomenon is to be studied through exploring the point of views of the actors of the universities; i.e., the phenomenon will be studied through the eyes of the people who experience it in their everyday lives, which essentially
dictate a qualitative stance in terms of research design (Bryman and Bell, 2009).

Furthermore, the review of literature on entrepreneurial leadership and entrepreneurial universities gives evidence of a majority of qualitative research methodologies employed as the nature of the field is as such that it has not yet reached a stage of maturity nor has it been fully explored. For example, in the case of entrepreneurial leadership, many leading authors in this field, such as Boyett (1996), Zerbinati and Souitaris (2002), Currie et al. (2008), O’Shea et al. (2007), Jacob et al. (2003), Etzkowitz (2003), Bramwell and Wolfe (2008), adopt a qualitative case study approach to their studies on entrepreneurial leadership and entrepreneurial universities. According to Yin (2009), this comparative study is to achieve literal replication logic and theoretical replication logic by selecting three case-study universities from the public and three from the private sector. Literal replication is where multiple case-studies are chosen from the same sector on the basis that they were predicted to show similar results while theoretical replication is where the case-studies from different sectors were chosen on the basis that they were predicted to show contrasting results.

Data Collection and Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were used for primary data collection because the researchers wanted to allow the participants’ perspective to emerge but at the same time wanted to ensure similar structure protocols to interviews followed across different cases in a comparative perspective. In addition to interviews archival records and non-participant observation were also used for the purpose of triangulating the primary data collected through interviews. Thirty interviews were conducted in total. Five interviews were conducted each from three private universities and five each were conducted from three public sector universities. The selected universities are chosen based on the justification that the six universities viz-a-viz Peshawar University, UET Peshawar, IMSciences, FAST Peshawar, CECOS, and Sarhad are deemed representative of overall set of public and private universities in KP Pakistan.

Literature suggests that it is the technological departments of universities that become entrepreneurial first (O’Shea et al. 2007; Etzkowitz, 2003; and Vogel and Kaghan, 2001). Therefore from each
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University two heads of department of Computer/IT/Electronics/Electrical department and three of their faculty members were selected using the non-probability sampling technique, which according to Singleton et al. (1993) should be used when the research is of exploratory nature, when it is more important to identify patterns and generate hypotheses for future studies than to generalize the research to a target population, when resources such as time, money, and labour are limited, and when the population is not readily identifiable. This study uses ‘purposive sampling’ (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.27).

Semi-structured interviews were employed as the main data collection tool specifically for the purpose of establishing a minimal structure across the different cases while at the same time for providing a leeway for new themes and ideas to emerge from the raw data collected in the field. Hence it provides structure and flexibility to the data collection and analysis of this study. Therefore this research entails two types of themes or categories: descriptive topic codes, the ones that were derived from literature and which the interview guide was based on and grounded codes, which emerged from the raw data itself by thoroughly reading the data and looking for recurring ideas and patterns (Thomas, 2003). One point worth noting here is that in the case of descriptive codes, it is only the broader topic that is derived from literature and not the content; the content of such codes are extracted from the data itself as is done in case of grounded codes.

Key Findings and Theoretical Implications

To understand entrepreneurship within organisations, it is important to consider the firm as a whole and how it affects individuals within firms (Lau et al., 2012). Leadership is interactive with culture, structure, and strategy of an organization. Organizations are an intricate web of the relationships between leadership, structure, strategy and culture (Kaipa et al., 2009; Morris and Kuratko, 2002). Therefore to what extent the leadership of an organization is entrepreneurial will depend upon the cultural norms, structural outlay, and strategic objectives of that organization. We argue that the
process of entrepreneurial leadership begins by changing the culture of an organization towards one that accepts, encourages and promotes entrepreneurial behaviour to achieve the strategic objectives. Structure then can be moulded to support and encourage the change. Entrepreneurial culture is featured by risk-taking, innovation, and proactiveness (Bramwell and Wolfe, 2008; Mohd Nor and Hassan, 2007; Clark, 1998); a sufficient degree of tolerance for mistakes/failure when pursuing entrepreneurial endeavours (Kuratko and Hornsby, 1998), and a high level of trust amongst the employees as well as with the management (Odoro, 2004). Effective leaders who advocate an entrepreneurial culture amongst employees need to be consistent with the university structure, which is often neglected by the managers. Structural change is necessary to enable employees at various levels with considerable autonomy to pursue creative ideas (Kuratko et al., 2005). They should also be provided with appropriate resources and time to invest in such ideas (Kirby, 2006; Stopford and Fuller, 1994; Katz and Gartner, 1998; Kuratko et al., 2005); and successful innovations should then be bestowed with matching rewards and reinforcements (Kirby, 2006; Quinn, 1990; Kuratko and Hornsby, 1998). An effective organisational structure should allow leadership initiatives for leveraging changes; encourage ideas coming from any level and engage anyone in the organization (Woods et al., 2004).

Case study findings in private sector universities

Out of six case study universities (three from the public sector and three from the private sector), only one public sector autonomous sectors face challenges and obstacles to develop effective entrepreneurial leadership. Contrary to what the literature suggests that the private sector is a better place for entrepreneurship to flourish (Eddleston, 2008; Tarabishyet al., 2005, Baum et al., 1998), the private sector universities in Pakistan are worse platform for establishing entrepreneurial leadership when compared to their public counterparts. The reason for this is the pure profit motives of these universities and their market myopia vision that act as road block to provide impetus for the entrepreneurial leadership. The reason for this is that the owners of these universities are too opportunistic driven which only focus on the immediate return of their investment rather than planning long term.
for sustainable development. As a result, their educational policies and budgets keep on changing without consistency. The government is unstable and the political turmoil leads every new government to cut the education budget. The political and economic situation for private universities, just as for any private organizations, is unstable and uncertain. This situation further motivates the owners of private universities to focus more on short-term return rather than on long-term orientation. For example one head of department of a private university puts it:

“Another reason is that our socioeconomic situation: political turmoil and general lack of security have given rise to a situation which is unstable and people feel lack of security, so we don’t know our future … such uncertainty is completely out of our control. We have to be to adaptive to this situation so we try to capture opportunities with immediate profits wherever we can. … it is difficult to think any investment for long term under this political instability.”

Some owners of private universities are diversifying their business and investing in real estate so as to secure their capital. As one of the lecturers of a private university puts it:

“Also the owners have a mind-set, and rightly so, that they cannot be sure of the future here so that is why they are investing in real estate sector as well. You have to understand that they are in it for the money so thats why their aims are profit making. But if they want to stay in the (education) market they have to invest in quality education and do good research projects, however, they choose to diversify their investment in non-education sectors to secure their profit return.”

The turbulent political, economic, and security conditions of the country creates a hostile environment for the private sector whose profit motives actually hinder the development of
entrepreneurial leadership rather than foster it. For example a faculty member of a private university says:

*The problem of the private sector universities in Pakistan is that they are 100% dependent upon the student fees, which is not the case in the rest of the world; there they also bring in profit through projects with the industry. Also the owners have a mind-set, and rightly so, that they cannot be sure of the future here (due to turbulent socio-economic conditions of the region) so that is why they are investing in the real estate sector as well; you have to understand that they are in it for the money so that is why their aims are making profit. Another reason is that our socioeconomic situation, political turmoil and general lack of security, have given rise to a situation which is unstable and people feel a lack of security and a static situation where they can invest whole heartedly with long-term implications in mind. Risk-taking is dependent upon your socioeconomic setup and neither is our political situation stable nor is our economic situation stable.*

Another faculty member of a private university says:

*As far as I am concerned innovative and new ideas emerge only when you are satisfied from your job in terms of financial security, exposure wise, future wise, etc. Our universities, especially in the private sector, are not satisfied with their on-going mental and technical developments; that is why survival is in terms of how to make it financially sound and hence to reduce their expenditures and increase their profits. And that is why we are lacking innovation in the technical fields. The faculty will concentrate on innovative ideas only when they are satisfied on all these fronts. The faculty members cannot take risks because the faculty members are*
surrounded by all these socioeconomic problems. You can take risk under certain conditions. The conditions governing the situation here are not conducive for risk-taking at all and without risk-taking you cannot progress on any front. All they do is routine work. You cannot be innovative. The problem of the private sector universities in Pakistan are that they are 100% dependent upon the student fees and are not generating revenue through projects and links with the industry. Furthermore the aspect of trust is quite weak here. To be honest like in any private sector organization, failures are dealt with a bit harshly and since there is no job security like in the public sector the faculty are extra careful to avoid such situations and that is one of the reasons that people here do not take much risks and that coupled with lack of resources leads to less occurrences of failures. In any case every failure or mistake is first evaluated then the repercussions are decided.

In addition to this lack of long-term investment in education, the fees of these private universities are much higher whilst the quality of education is lower, and their staff are overloaded, underpaid and lack of high calibre in human resources. These represent major challenges and barriers in private sector universities, which significantly handicap their competitiveness at national and international levels.

Case study findings in public sector universities

The traditional public sector universities on the other hand are not much better off than the private universities in terms of supporting an entrepreneurial culture and encourage entrepreneurial leadership. However, their reasons for non-presence of entrepreneurial leadership are different than those of the private universities. The main hurdle to public universities implementing entrepreneurial leadership is the administration of the public universities and the
way they are influenced by the political whims of the government. A number of authors have warned against implementing entrepreneurial leadership within the public sector; e.g., Terry (1993), and Mouly and Sankaran (2007). The reason for this is that the public sector organizations are bureaucratic, hierarchical, politically oriented, and serve numerous stakeholders. But at the same time a number of authors advocate implementing such models but with due consideration to the context of the public sector (Zerbinati and Souitaris, 2005; Mohd Nor and Hassan, 2007; Morris and Jones, 1999).

The respondents of two public universities that lacked entrepreneurial orientation regarded the administration as the main hurdle to implementing entrepreneurial leadership. The administration of the public sector universities plays quite a negative role towards initiating and implementing new ideas. The hierarchical nature of these universities coupled with the high power distance culture the universities operate in makes it very difficult for such ideas to flourish from the lower echelons of the universities, and majority of the innovations are politically dictated rather than emerging from the creative endeavours of the faculty. Additionally, the administration is plagued with numerous problems. First and foremost are the unnecessary emphasis upon rules and regulations that generates procedural bottlenecks which makes it difficult for the faculty to take care of the routine mundane issues let alone creative ideas and new projects. The decisions are not made in real time and more often than not the window of opportunity is not taken advantage of. Furthermore this makes it difficult for the private sector to deal with these universities as their bills and paper work take too long to process. In addition to this the clerical staff in the administration takes undue advantage of such procedural bottlenecks to raise their own importance over the faculty by stalling their requests and sometimes asking for favours in return. As one of the heads of departments of a University of Peshawar, a public university says:

*The administration plays a very strong role hindering our progress rather than supporting us. The administration staff always create problems for us. And again only those people come to occupy such posts with good political links. The administrators think they are the*
owners and managers rather than playing their true supportive role to academic staff.

Similarly another faculty member says the same:

*But we have some issues with the administration in terms of trust as they do not support us in pursuing projects and create hindrances by using bottlenecks and non-technical people raising issues regarding projects that are not their concern. Another problem is that if you do get to approve a project they will give you initial money and you will start a project but then they will hold back the rest of the money for no good reason and it will cause you a lot of trouble and embarrassment with the third party. And this is one of the main reasons private organizations don’t like to do projects with public organizations as the latter holds back the money long even after the former has completed their end of the bargain.*

The political links in the administration system leads to nepotism and favouritism which in turn causes the faculty of these universities to put their efforts into keeping the key people in the administration happy rather than pursuing innovative tasks. This also grants the administration too much power over the faculty and allows it to play too much of a controlling role. At the same time the people in the administration do not understand research or related to the research and teaching field but it is them who make the decisions regarding project to take up and what budget should be granted. This is a management infrastructural defect to flout the principle of academic work as such expertise-related decisions should not be made by non-technical people, the administration.

Nevertheless, despite the constraints in public sector administration structure, one successful case study university, autonomous IMSciences has illustrated how it overcomes these obstacles and develops an effective entrepreneurial leadership and orientation in the public sector context. IMSciences operates a flat hierarchy and has effectively limited the role of the administration to its bare essential activities. Unlike the other public sector universities
where the administration rules the faculty, in IMSciences the role of the administration is confined to the bare minimum and the academics are given more of a controlling role. This allows IMSciences to be rid of the negatives and weaknesses of both sectors: the profit motive of the private sector, the controlling role of the administration and the political authoritarianism of the public sector universities.

An entrepreneurial university in the Pakistani context, in order to implement entrepreneurial leadership, needs to be partially government funded to allow it stability against the turbulent socio-economic and political conditions and at the same time to maintain non-profit motives and objectives through a regular source of sustainable funding. But at the same time such a university needs to be independent of the government agendas and the political whims, having a structure that acts as that of a private sector organization: sensitive to the market, flexible enough for changes, and most importantly rid of the administration issues of the public sector universities. Such a university has to generate a large majority of its funding from its own private sources. This is where the university will then have to pursue entrepreneurial endeavours in order to generate enough funding to sustain itself and for future reinvestment and thus will actively have to participate in pursuing the Third Task objectives. This will lead such a university to be relatively independent of the government agendas and allows it to set its own vision, missions and goals, that gives rise to self-sustained development. In order to achieve these objectives, the faculties at operational level need actively participate in entrepreneurial endeavours, the university engage operational staff in developing entrepreneurial leadership – everyone is the leader of their own project and everyone is the entrepreneur to generate new ideas. The top management may set the vision of the organisation, it is the operational staff who perform and develop entrepreneurial culture and behaviour. We argue that the visionary leadership is needed from the top management but entrepreneurial leadership is developed at the operational level with bottom up engagement mechanism.

The strategic aims of the faculty and entrepreneurial orientation need to be supported with an appropriate university structure. As the case illustrates, the structure of IMSciences has got rid of the traditional bureaucratic administration as well as its associated problems such as red tape, too much authority with the clerical staff for ill-decision.
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making, nepotism and favouritism cultural constraint. Its reformed new structure encourage individual engagement and autonomy, provides resources and time to reward its operational staff meanwhile it promotes a fair and tolerant culture for mistakes and failures. This enables entrepreneurial leadership to be delegated downwards and further developed from bottom up in the university systems. For example a faculty member of IMSciences says:

**IMSciences has a flat hierarchy. Since operational staff are delegated with autonomy, decisions are made very quickly here. And it is the beauty of the structure of IMSciences... it now has links with the industry, being independent in their fund generation and relative autonomous from government governance ... we do so much better than any private or public university in this region (Khyber PutkhtoonKhwa) because of our structural reforms and the implementation of operational entrepreneurship. Other reason for us outperforming private sector universities, is that people lack trust of the private-owned universities as they do not have the same resources and quality of education like the public sector universities. Our university although a public sector university but only partly funded by the government. We have a private like structure... Our pay scales are different from the other public sector universities. The jobs are not permanent as in government jobs. Hiring and firing is done on a private basis. Continuances of jobs are performance based. So only those people are attracted to work here who have potential to perform. Government agendas are not imposed on this university as is done on the other public sector universities. More importantly our university allows for greater initiation from anyone and all levels of the organization; no matter which level you are operating on if you
have a good idea then you can turn it into reality with rewards and support.”

While a head of department of IMSciences states:

“Yes, the entrepreneurial value is explicitly communicated to all levels of staff and documented in the vision and mission statements. It is also emphasized in the key value of organisational culture and the individual entrepreneurial thinking is supported by the directors. We have created the Entrepreneurship Development Centre and develop linkages with the Chamber of Commerce and Small and Medium Enterprise Development. The procedural bottlenecks are removed (as compared to other public universities) and flat hierarchy is supported specifically to facilitate the Third Task. This is due to the support of the upper level management and is obvious from all the aspects of the university and from the bottom up operational staff.”

Given its access to politically controlled resources, the public sector is more ideal for implementing entrepreneurial leadership as compared to the private sector. More critically, excessive opportunistic and profit driven orientation seems to negatively impact upon the sustainable development of universities in a long run. In the university context, operational staff is the core for the successful implementation of entrepreneurial leadership while the top management plays a facilitating role to provide a vision and permit operational structural change. To sum up the case study evidence on how entrepreneurial leadership can be developed in the university, we illustrate an entrepreneurial leadership model in a turbulent university context as follows (Figure 1):
In addition to the ‘entrepreneurial leadership model’ (Figure 1), our key findings from six case study universities also suggest three propositions:

**Proposition 1:**

The development of entrepreneurial leadership in university faculty is characterised as ‘operational leadership’ which need to be performed and engaged by the middle management and frontline staff rather than the top down approach.

**Proposition 2:**

The implementation of entrepreneurial leadership in university context can be initiated by creating an entrepreneurial culture, but more importantly the growth of such a culture needs to be supported by strategic entrepreneurial orientation and relevant organisational structure.

**Proposition 3:**

Contrary to what literature suggests, due to the unique socio-economic and cultural contextual factors of Pakistan, the public sector universities are better suited to implement entrepreneurial leadership compared to their private counterparts.

**Figure 1:**

*Entrepreneurial Leadership Model in a Turbulent University Context*

Source: Authors’ constructed
Conclusions

This research makes two theoretical contributions to the broader field of knowledge. First, it identified the constricting factors that act as roadblocks to the implementation of entrepreneurial leadership in the public sector as well as the private sector universities in Pakistan. This includes the pure profit motives of the private universities being a constricting factor to the implementation of entrepreneurial leadership as opposed to it being an enabling factor for Western universities. Similarly, this study emphasises the constricting and negative role played by the strong bureaucratic administration of the public sector universities, their susceptibility to the political whims of the government, and their over-reliance on government funding as a hurdle to the implementation of such leadership in the public universities. Though related issues of Pakistani universities are somehow previously explored, we believe this research is first of its kind to investigate the scope and nature of entrepreneurial leadership in both public and private universities. Second, it focused on theory development of an entrepreneurial leadership model for universities in developing countries like Pakistan. It brought forth the perspectives of the faculty of these universities, which were not researched before, and contributed a new model for entrepreneurial leadership at operational level in the universities of Pakistan. It shows how different environmental factors significantly influence leadership theories.

The study bears widespread implications for theory and practice especially in the context of Pakistani universities. The first and foremost is a model for entrepreneurial leadership which is proposed to all universities for further application. The government too can restructure the existing public universities according to this model especially focusing on the fact that entrepreneurial leadership can be established in these universities and that they participate in the Third Task. As now the only university in the region that is found to have evidence of the entrepreneurial leadership is IMSciences and the initiative for that came from the university itself and its founders, suggesting a ‘university push model’ (Etzkowitz and Zhou, 2007, p.2)
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rather than a ‘government pull model’. The latter model suggests that the government takes an active part in the industry-government-university Triple Helix model by introducing such policies that will provide the impetus for the universities to establish a more entrepreneurial stance. Secondly, while such mass restructuring of these universities is a difficult endeavour and often meet with immense resistance, nevertheless, entrepreneurial leaders will provide the spirit to bring their institutions to a level of self-sustaining one. Moreover, the HEC Pakistan may also take theoretical insights for the establishment of future universities. New public universities can be based on this model to initially avoid the weaknesses of the current public model ensuring that future universities adopt an entrepreneurial stance from the start, thereby actively pursuing the Third Task of knowledge transfer and implementing entrepreneurial leadership.

**Limitation and Further Research**

Like any social science research, this research too is not immune the certain limitations. First of all, the study relies on qualitative data collected on one point in time without a longitudinal assessment. Therefore it only provides a snapshot perspective of the phenomenon rather than in-depth understanding of the evolution and development of the entrepreneurial leadership. This gives rise to a further longitudinal study on this topic to assess any emerging issues and changes. Secondly, interview data is designed to focus on the faculty level of the university rather than on top management. Thus, the role of vice chancellor in the leadership process is only reviewed from the perspective of middle management, which may contain positional bias. Further research may adopt a quantitative design to testify this study’s findings to a larger population or different country context.
References


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