# An Analysis of the Relationship Between Self Leadership Strategies and Psychological Empowerment among Faculty Members at Najran University

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**Abstract:** The study aimed to understand the relationship between self-leadership strategies and psychological empowerment among faculty members at Najran University. The sample of the study consists of (340) faculty members who were randomly selected for the academic year 2017/2018. A questionnaire has been created with the question about self-leadership strategies and psychological empowerment for the survey. Quantitative correlation and stepwise regression methods were used to analyze the collected data. The results revealed that natural reward strategies and constructive thought patterns strategies showed a clear correlation with psychological empowerment among faculty members at Najran university. In contrast, behavior-focused strategies have shown that there is no correlation with psychological empowerment among faculty members at Najran university. This study advises to enhance self-leadership and psychological empowerment among faculty members through training in leadership strategies in order to set their own goals and focus on improving self-leadership strategies that enhance the psychological empowerment of faculty members, further aiding them to increase their effectiveness and productivity through their subsequent careers.

**Keywords***: self-Leadership; strategies; psychological empowerment; faculty members.*

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# تحليل استراتيجيات القيادة الذاتية وعلاقتها بالتمكين النفسي لدى أعضاء هيئة التدريس بجامعة نجران

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(قدم للنشر في ١١/ ١١/ ١٤٤٠هـ؛ وقبل للنشر في ٢٢/ ٠٥/ ١٤٤١هـ)

**المستخلص:** هدفت الدراسة إلىٰ فهم العلاقة بين استراتيجيات القيادة الذاتية والتمكين النفسي بين أعضاء هيئة التدريس في الجامعة السعودية الناشئة. تكونت عينة الدراسة من (٣٤٠) عضو هيئة تدريس تم اختيارهم عشوائيًا للعام الدراسي ٢٠١٧/ ٢٠١٨. تم إنشاء استبيان يتكون من استراتيجيات القيادة الذاتية والتمكين النفسي لغرض الدراسة، واستخدم الارتباط الكمي وطرق الانحدار التدريجي لتحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها. أظهرت النتائج أن استراتيجيات المكافآت الطبيعية وأنماط التفكير البنّاء وجود علاقة واضحة مع التمكين النفسي لدىٰ أعضاء هيئة التدريس بجامعة نجران. في المقابل، لم تظهر الاستراتيجيات التي تركز علىٰ السلوك أي ارتباط بالتمكين النفسي بين أعضاء هيئة التدريس بالجامعة. تنصح هذه الدراسة بتعزيز القيادة الذاتية والتمكين النفسي لدىٰ أعضاء هيئة التدريس بالجامعات السعودية، ومزيد من مساعدتهم علىٰ زيادة كفائتهم خلال حياتهم المهنية اللاحقة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** القيادة الذاتية ؛ الاستراتيجيات؛ التمكين النفسي؛ أعضاء هيئة التدريس.

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**Introduction**

The trend of higher education has become popular among the masses and this has become a developing industry which continues to bring changes and betterment. There are different factors which affect the overall performance of the higher education system of different institutes, these includes the rapid use of technology, increase in the globalization, new employment options and demands, diversity among the population of students and the need of students. When the institutes are not being able to fulfill the needs of higher education system than this results in the change in curriculum for students and teachers, quality of education is affected and the teaching methods has to suffer. This cause the change in the expectation of the faculty being part of this higher education system. The sense of responsibility among the faculty members regarding their tasks and duties has suffered a lot and they are not able to actively participate in the development of organization in which they are working (Kamel, 2016). The socialization process of faculty member has different factors which impacted their leadership qualities.

Faculty members are that the most important part of any university which can bring the innovative change in the university they have been serving. The innovation on the part of faculty members is the requirement for the success of any organization to have such innovators as the members of team which value the high level of professionalism (Camblin and Steger, 2000). But now, it has become a challenge for the faculty members to do all these tasks and made success in the academic settings.

In order to make success in the academic setting, the most important skill which is required by the faculty members is the leadership because it would improve the self-efficacy among them (Al-Rouqi, 2016 & Sharma & Singh, 2017). This would help them to do something innovating for the institutes and the higher education system. There are different self-leadership strategies which should be implemented by the faculty members as it would help them in their own professional development as well as the development of organization they have been working with. This report would illustrate about the analysis of self-leadership strategies and its relationship with psychological empowerment among faculty members at Najran University.

**Problem Statement**

Currently, the increase in the globalization and competition has play a major role in changing the role of higher education institutions. Consequently, universities are expected to be educational organizations in order to remain viable, contain progress by enhancing their role in increasing employee self-efficacy, as well as impacts their career progress, eventual promotion and development of educational institution (Kamel, 2016; Sharma & Singh, 2017). Therefore, the success of any organization depends on the amount of effort put into the development of their human resources. The faculty members form the most valuable part of education system and their work quality depends largely on their dynamism in this system. So, the empowerment of faculty members' abilities directly affects the overall the academic performances in higher educations because they play a crucial role in the development and advancement of the society in many dimensions, and it is imperative for universities to adopt appropriate mechanisms for this empowerment (Alavijeh.; Rajati.; Hatamzadeh.; Solaimanizadeh,. & Jalilian,, 2019).

The empowerment and leadership have shown that there is agreement among researchers about the need for individuals working for more empowerment within organizations to keep pace with the rapidly changing in the global competitive environment (Sorcinelli, 1994; Houghton and Yoho, 2005; Hara, 2009; Al-Abrrow & Al-Noor, 2017; Moradpour, Abedi & Bahonar, 2017; Al-Otaibi, 2018 & Thomas & Rahschulte, 2018). The psychological empowerment explains empowered individuals who are competent and able to influence their jobs and work environments in meaningful ways. These impacts are particularly important for leadership development given the high expectations that organizations place on employees which enhanced individual's flexibility and focus and thus have become more aware and committed (Solansky, 2014).

Hahm (2018) explains that if an individual has the qualities of self-leaderships than it makes them to feel empowered. This would lead themselves to be self-aware and they would be committed towards their goals and values in life. This explains that there is a positive association between self-leadership and psychological development. In the educational

setting, such faculty members would be positively relating to each other and eventually helps in the achievement of goals (Solansky, 2014). For example, problem solving is the most used tactic by faculty to tackle problems, based on adopting the path of independent thinking and decision-making (Hara, 2009). However, there are differences between individuals in their level of self-leadership and empowerment, which explains the different needs of faculty members who know how to move forward on their own or with the help of their universities and those who remain on the same path and cannot advance in their academic positions (Norris, 2008). Therefore, it is important for higher education institutions to recognize that the self-leadership is important and they should take necessary actions to enhance self- leadership strategies for their faculty members on benefiting the student community for facing challenges in now days (Kranthi, 2015).

The Saudi Vision 2030 philosophy focused on developing leaders at all levels who are able to adapt, collaborate and work within diversity, and they would be able to achieve their own defined goals. Despite the growing interest in topics related to the concept of psychological empowerment and self-driving, the research efforts into the topic of self-leadership strategies and psychological empowerment to date, have not previously studied among academics (Al-Otaibi, 2018 & Thomas & Rahschulte, 2018). Faculty members should learn how to meet these challenges as they represent an important aspect of success in their academic lives. Thus, we must understand the different needs of faculty members who know how to move forward by themselves and universities and those who remain in same track and cannot progress in their academic positions. In spite of much conceptual work, this study investigates the relationship between self-leadership strategies and psychological empowerment among faculty members at Najran University and analyzes the link between them, while addressing specific demographic variables.

## Objectives
1. To identify the level of self-leadership strategies of faculty members at Najran University.
2. To identify the level of psychological empowerment of faculty members at Najran University.

3. To analyze the relationship between the self-leadership strategies and the psychological empowerment dimensions among faculty members at Najran University.
4. To verify the role self-leadership plays in enhancing the psychological empowerment of faculty members at Najran university, despite demographic variables.

## Research Questions and Hypotheses
Question 1: What is the relationship between the self-leadership strategies and the psychological empowerment among faculty members at Najran University?

*Hypothesis 1*: There is a significant relationship between self-leadership strategies and psychological empowerment among faculty members at Najran University (H1a: Behavior-focused strategies; H1b: Natural-reward strategies; H3c: constructive thought pattern strategies)

Question 2: Are there any statistically significant differences at the level of (P=0.05) for self-leadership strategies among faculty members at Najran University due to (gender, academic rank, and years of experience)?

*Hypothesis 2:* There is a statistically significant differences for self-leadership strategies among faculty members at Najran University due to (H2a: gender; H2b: academic rank, and H2c: years of experience)?

## Theoretical Background
### Self-leadership
In the competitive landscape of this time, self-leadership is important for the higher education systems (Tastan, 2013). The concept of self-leadership is highly linked with the different theories of self-influence which include the theories about self-control, self-regulation and self-management. (Neck & Houghton, 2006; Stewart, et al., 2011; Ahmed; Khan & Bhatti, 2017 & Mentz, 2018).Self leadership is defined as the set of skills with the help of which an individual is able to indulgence his or her own performance and behave in such a way that he or she can achieve the high level of competence and success with their overall effectiveness (Mentz, 2018). A study done by Jooste & Frantz (2017) revealed that self-leadership of academics refers to being driven by motivation and self-influence to

direct oneself towards achieving optimum performance in a situation (Houghton and Yoho, 2005). There is a set of different cognitive strategies which affect the overall result of an employee performance and it is related to the self-leadership (Thomas, & Rahschulte, 2018). The cognitive strategies are a process which helps the people to lead and motivate themselves in such a way that they are able to achieve their desired goals and perform the effective performance with the help of their behavior change. There are three strategies which come under the umbrella of self-leadership strategies and it includes; behavior-focused strategy, natural reward strategies, and constructive thought pattern strategies. (Neck and Manz, 2010; Tetik, 2016 & Thomas, & Rahschulte, 2018). In the prediction of overall organization abilities of an individual, there is positive correlation between the self-leadership strategies (Rajaeepoor; Rahimi & Aghababaei, 2012).

*Behavior-focused strategies* provide specific approaches toward changing or eliminating ineffective or unproductive behaviors and replacing the behavior with an effective one, in order to facilitate behavioral management, especially while doing unpleasant tasks, and build enjoyable features into people's activities (Neck & Manz, 2010). This strategy designed to enhance self-awareness through various methods such as self-goal setting, self-reward, self-punishment, self-observation, and self-cueing (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Self-observation is the first step where the individual's awareness of understanding of how, when, and why they engage in specific behaviors. This type of self-awareness can more effectively set effective behavior-altering goals for themselves (Manz & Neck, 2010). Stewart, Courtright, & Manz. (2011) added that self-observation and self-goal strategies help to identify the self-behavior of a person and enables changes in his/her one's behaviors to that improve performance. Self-observation and self-goal setting provide direct requirements from individuals in an open innovation environment to build an identity and to create meaning in their work places (Neck & Manz, 2010 & Ahmed, et al, 2017). On the other hand, self-reward should link directly to the goal attainment through praising oneself for a job well done. These rewards may be simple or intangible, such as mentally congratulating oneself for an important accomplishment or treating oneself to a new outfit or

a night at the movies. Self-punishment involves a constructive self-examination of failures and unproductive behaviors in order to reshape these behaviors in more positive directions. These methods are intended to develop feelings of competence and self-determination (Houghton & and Yoho, 2005). However, excessive self-punishment such as unrealistic self-criticisms, leading to feelings of guilt and inadequacy, is often counterproductive and should be avoided (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Finally, self-cueing is used as a method to appreciate constructive behaviors and remove destructive behaviors (Manz & Neck, 2004). External cueing encourages a person to maintain motivation and devotion. There are several forms of external cueing include lists, memos, screensavers, and encouraging or inspiring posters. Consequently, the behavior-focused strategies act as contributors to successful outcomes by eliminating the negative behaviors.

*Natural reward strategies* concentrate on those aspects of the work itself that create situations in which activities motivate individuals instead of an external source. For example, an individual may decorate one's workplace with personal touches or listen to soft music while doing tasks. These actions may lead to increased feelings of competence, self-determination, and sense of purpose (Ahmed, et al., 2017 &Thomas & Rahschulte, 2018). According to Laschinger, Finegan & Wilk (2009), natural reward strategies include two main approaches: (a) incorporating enjoyable and pleasant features into an activity to obtain value and make it naturally rewarding, and (b) shaping individuals' perceptions by focusing on the activity's rewarding aspects. These two approaches of natural reward strategies are useful in creating the feelings of motivation among the individuals. They develop the skills of competence, self-determination and sense of purpose and at the end they would be able to increase their performance that is based on their behavior change. (Ahmed, et al., 2017 &Thomas & Rahschulte, 2018).

*Constructive thought pattern strategies* are managed by taking control of the cognitive processes which is able to reshape certain mental processes in order to facilitate more positive and optimistic thinking patterns and mental processes that can have a significant impact on improving the individual performance (Neck & Houghton, 2006).). These

strategies consist of three primary tools: (a) improvement and self-analysis of belief systems, (b) mental imagery of an efficient performance outcome, and (c) positive self-talk (Manz and Neck, 2004 & Ahmed, et al., 2017). Usually, dysfunctional beliefs result in habitually dysfunctional thought processes, which can lead to depression, unhappiness, and personal ineffectiveness (Joo & Shim, 2010). Using constructive thought pattern strategies, individuals can verify their thought patterns and replace dysfunctional ones if needed in order to engage in more rational and effective cognitive processes (Joo & Shim, 2010). Self-talk indicates what individuals silently tell to one self. Emotional states of the individuals reflect the positive or negative self-talk, which in turn affect cognition (Neck & Manz, 2010). The understanding the impact of internal thought of self-talk, enables the individuals to create positive habitual methods of replacing negative, destructive self-talk with optimistic self-talk (Neck and Houghton, 2006). At the end, mental imagery is a form of a creative view which enables an individual to view a task before it actually happens, in this way that individual create the view of the tasks that is needed to be done. This helps individual to perform in a good way for the actual task (Manz & Neck, 2004).

**Psychological Empowerment**

Generally, psychological empowerment is a process which is used to enhance the sense of self-efficacy of employees. It leads them towards empowerment that highlights one's confidence and efficiency in influence work, and freedom to choose how to perform tasks by identifying the conditions that enhance the feeling of weakness and work to remove and overcome by formal regulatory practices and informal means that rely on providing information on self-efficacy (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Al-Abrrow & Al-Noor, 2017 & Thomas & Rahschulte, 2018). Thus, psychological empowerment has its basic focus on self-motivation rather than on administrative practices that are used to increase the level of power owned by working individuals. However, psychological empowerment is a dynamic variable that can change over time; people may become more empowered over time and after varied life experiences. In relation to leadership, psychological empowerment can improve "leader strength" that can change over time and as an outcome of leadership development.

Although numerous studies has confirmed that psychological empowerment works to increase the employees 'sense of personal control and increases their motivation towards work and this in turn leads to positive administrative results at the organization level, and has an important role in their growth and development in general and it affects organizational variables such as job satisfaction and job commitment and increased productivity, leadership behaviors, and overall job performance (Spreitzer, 1995; Wilson, 2011; Mishra, 2016; Al-Otaibi, 2018; and Thomas & Rahschulte, 2018). This has shown to be an agreement among researchers on the need for individuals working for more empowerment within organizations in order to keep pace with the rapidly changing global competitive environment. Moreover, the psychological empowerment is a form of intrinsic motivation which has four cognitive dimensions (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Wilson,2011; Al-Otaibi, 2018). So psychological empowerment means that it refers to the value of a task itself in relation to an individual's own task and that helps to encourage intrinsic motivation between work role requirements and one's beliefs and values. This congruence between personal value and work role expectations contributes to the belief that work is an end in itself. Competence means the ability of a working individual to successfully accomplish his or her tasks based on his experiences, skills and knowledge to perform a specific task effectively. The impact is the degree to which an individual's beliefs that she or he can affect the strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes that are related to performance outcomes in order to be more motivated. Finally, self-determination is related to one's opportunity to make a decision based on the degree of independence enjoyed by the individual in the performance of his work so that he has freedom in the methods of performing the work.

All of these are the important dimension of the cognitive process of the individual and these are said to be the foundation stones behind the psychological empowerment mechanism which employees have to exhibit in the workplace. This mechanism creates the sense of empowerment, self-determination, self-efficacy and competence in the individual which energize them for their work. As a result, they would be able to perform in a good way. However, the lack of any single dimension will deflate, though not

completely eliminate, the overall degree of perceived empowerment (Rajaeepoor, et al., 2012; Al-Abrrow & Al-Noor, 2017; and Thomas & Rahschulte, 2018).

Education is important factor for the progress of nations, it is the interest in empowering the teacher, especially if we know that the efficiency of his productivity depends on his own abilities by utilizing his abilities and talents to raise his morale, increase his self-confidence and his sense of security and job security (Al-Nawajha, 2016). It is important that empowerment should begin with the individual who promotes meaningful behaviors and links them with the empowerment objectives and methodologies applied in the organization like teachers because teaching is most important profession. Consequently, psychological empowerment has its focus on the continuous communication, setting inspirational goals, and encouraging working individuals which making people feel valued by involving them in decisions, asking them to participate in the planning process, praising them and continually providing adequate training and support, leading to productivity, creativity and innovation, and ultimately, an improvement of overall organizational performance.

**Self-leadership strategies and psychological empowerment**

Theoretically, self-leadership is different from psychological empowerment but they both lead to the improved performance of the individuals. (Vecchio, Justin & Pearce, 2010). As stated by Houghton and Yoho (2005), self-leadership is a process of using cognitive and behavioral strategies designed positively to influence personal effectiveness. Psychological empowerment, by contrast, is a cognitive status that is created based on a malleable cognitive assemblage. Thus, self-leadership is the planning state of empowerment while psychological empowerment is the being state of empowerment (Thomas & Rahschulte, 2018) by promoting and using awareness in meaning, self-determination, impact, and competence. When these cognitions are adopted, the person is actively oriented toward the work role (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Rajaeepoor, et al., 2012 & Thomas & Rahschulte, 2018). The self-leadership strategies involve utilization of behavioral and mental techniques of behavior-focused, natural reward, and constructive strategy classes (Manz & Neck, 2004; Neck & Houghton, 2006)

Many studies have shown that the self-leadership strategies playing an important role in enhancing psychological empowerment as factors motivating individuals to influence themselves in order to perform a job successfully; specifically, in educational settings. These can facilitate change and increase job commitment, well-being, and job satisfaction as well as overall performance outcomes of employees (Carson and King, 2005; Hugoton and Yoho, 2005; Wilson, 2011; Rajaeepoor, et al., 2012; Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015; Al-Rouqi, 2016; Ahmed, et al.,2017; Al-Otibi 2018; Thomas and Rahschulte, 2018). In a study done by Carson and King (2005) suggested, "Empowerment and self-leadership are avenues to influence and or improve direction and motivation within organizations by placing greater emphasis on employee mindset and skill development for each individual in the workplace" (p. 1050). Individuals who display self-leadership will seek ways to direct their own activities through behavioral strategies, through natural reward drawn from their work, and through cognitive thought strategies.

Likewise, Taştan (2013) explains that it is important for the faculty members that they must develop and follow the strategies for self-leaderships as it would help them to bring the positive change and energy in their work environment and thinking process. Their psychological empowerment would help them to enhance their performance. Manz and Neck (2004) found that an employee having self-leadership skills exhibits more confidence and has a greater number of chances to perform better by employing strategies to identify and meet goals.

The consequences of psychological empowerment related to behavioral self-leadership strategies of self-observation, self-goal setting and self-reward can create feelings of self-determination and competence. For example, extending more autonomy to employees during customer interactions, refraining from censure when errors occurred, allowed self-corrective feedback in the absence of supervisory control (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Similarly, natural reward strategies are specifically intended to affect feelings of competence, self-control, and impact. in the same way that psychological empowerment related to natural rewards self-leadership strategies include work/job satisfaction, organizational commitment,

low intent to quit, work performance, and meaning (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Developing a natural rewards-oriented focus on aspects of work is most rewarding is likely to help individuals to motivate themselves towards excellence even with less desirable tasks.

Moreover, Zhang and Bartol (2010) commented that psychological empowerment makes a substantial contribution to psychological well-being, regardless of gender, age, or religious affiliation. Individuals are able to easily address stressful situations in the workplace if they have high self-efficacy and self-awareness. In addition, supervisory support influences the development of an individual's self-leadership qualities and it helps them gain efficiency, enhances their psychological empowerment, and demonstrates a high level of positive attitude or feeling towards their work (Al-Magableh & Otoum, 2014).

Rajaeepoor, et al. (2012) analyzed self-leadership strategies and their relationship with psychological empowerment among faculty members at University of Isfahan Medical Science. The results have shown that there is a significant and positive relation between the self-leadership behavioral-focused strategies, natural reward strategies, constructive thought strategies, and psychological empowerment; moreover, among self-leadership strategies, behavioral-focused strategies play a significant role in anticipating psychological empowerment. Amundsen and Martinsen (2015) added that self-leadership and psychological empowerment are strongly correlated and presented the 'be-and-do' characteristic of the empowered employees. Faculty members can be truly empowered if their universities support their psychological empowerment and self-leadership (Rajaeepoor, et al., 2012). Another study done by Jomah (2017) indicated that psychological empowerment is related to more experience and respective responsibilities in the workplace and it can be increased as the academic experiences of faculty members will be increase.

Further, psychological empowerment impacts individual behavior, attitude, and psychological outcomes, while on the other hand self-leadership increases a person's motivational skills and influences his or her mental strength. So, it can be said that there is an association between self-leadership, psychological empowerment and wellbeing of individuals. In the empowerment process, all dimensions are linked and connected with other dimensions. Self-leadership gives rise to successful leaders who utilize strategies to focus on the idea of self-efficacy (Laschinger, et al., 2009). Finally, there is a positive relationship between self-leadership and psychological empowerment. Indeed, an individual who utilizing psychological empowerment is more likely to engage in self-leading behaviors than an individual who is not utilizing psychological empowerment. However, self-leadership strategies have specified that its various strategies should lead to several cognitive states of psychological empowerment (Lee & Kim, 2013).Therefore, it is necessary to promote self-leadership qualities and improve their level of psychological empowerment which will have a noticeable impact on the self-efficacy, motivations, and self-initiation of employees' overall performance.

**Methodology**
Procedure and Participants

This study employed a descriptive correlative method to investigate the relationship between self-leadership strategies and psychological empowerment among faculty members of Najran University. Data were collected through a survey questionnaire, which was constructed for the purposes of this research. The researcher used various statistical methods, including descriptive, correlation, and stepwise regression analyses; data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences SPSS (Version 17.0) After obtaining consent from the ethical research committee of [SHED/15/238], the present data collection took place in Najran university. Participants in this study answered the questionnaire in a voluntary manner. The researcher followed ethical research practices to avoid any errors in conducting the study, stressed that the collected data were used for academic purposes only.

The study population consisted of all faculty members at Najran University in the 2017–2018 academic year. An administrator from the target university sent an e-mail to selected faculty members asking that they participate in the survey. A sample included 340 faculty members who were chosen randomly from the study population as shown in Table 1.

*Table 1. Demographic Variables of the Sample.*

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 108 | 31.8 % |
| | Female | 232 | 68.2% |
| Academic Rank | Professor | 48 | 14.1% |
| | Associate Professor | 26 | 7.6% |
| | Assistant Professor | 98 | 28.8 % |
| | Lecture | 168 | 49.4 % |
| Academic Experience | Less than 5 years | 146 | 42.9% |
| | 5 – 10 years | 118 | 34.7 % |
| | More than 10 years | 76 | 22.4% |

In terms of gender, there were 108 males (31.8 %) and 232 females (68.2 %). In terms of academic rank, 48 were in professor rank (14.1 %), 26 in their associate professor (7.6 %), 98 in their assistant professor rank (28.8 %), and 168 were in lecture rank (49.4%). In regards to their academic experience, 146 had worked for less than 5 year (42.9%), 118 had worked 1-5 years (34.7 %), and 76 had worked longer than 10 years (22.4%). In summary, most respondents were female in their lecture rank with less than 10 years of experience. The overall sample consist of more female respondents than the male respondents, as the female respondents can be easily reached and efficient data can be collected by them.

*Data Collection Tools*
The survey instrument consisted of an existing, validated scale for each of the study variables to be tested. In order to define the level of individuals displaying the dependent variable, self- leadership strategies, a revised self-leadership Strategies questionnaire (SLSQ) by Houghton and Neck (2002) was modified to fit the context of the present study. The modified instrument, which we call the Self-leadership Scale (SLS), contains 28 items that are divided into three main strategies and nine-subdimensions: (1) behavior-focused strategies (self-goal, self-reward, self-punishment, self-observation, and self-cueing), (2) natural reward, and (3) constructive thought pattern strategies (self-talk, visualizing-successful, and evaluating-beliefs.

To assess the independent variable, psychological empowerment, the researcher used the multidimensional scale of psychological empowerment developed by Speritzer (1995) and confirmed the validity of the four-dimensional scale of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. The scale contains (12) sentences.

To determine the degree of the respondents' agreement with the survey items, a five-point Likert scale was used. However, the final estimation level for a mean average was determined according to the following: mean averages between 3.34 and 5.00 indicated a high level of agreement, those between 2.67 and 3.33 indicated a moderate level of agreement, and those between 1.00 and 2.66 indicated a low level of agreement.

Control variables. In order to control for the impacts on the relation between research variables, we used gender, academic rank, and work experience as control variables. In the first steps of the regression analyses, control variables were entered to the analysis first. Then, the impacts of independent variables on dependents were explored displays the descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for the study variables.

**Findings**
The study data was analyzed using the SPSS version 17 software package.
*Question* 1: What is the relationship between the self-leadership strategies and the psychological empowerment among faculty members at Najran University?

*Table 2. Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliabilities among the Indicator Variables*

| Variables | Mean SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Behavior-focused strategies | 3.73 0.47 | (0.91) | | | | |
| 2. Natural-reward strategies | 3.61 0.60 | .583** | (0.93) | | | |
| 3.Constructive thought pattern strategies | 3.70 0.50 | .639** | .526** | (0.92) | | |
| 4. Self-leadership strategies | 3.68 0.469 | .797** | .787** | .767** | (0.90) | |
| 5. Psychological empowerment | 3.70 0.61 | .233 | .386** | .298** | .439** | (0.88) |

**\*\*p <.01. \*\*\*p <.001**

Table 2 presents that the results indicate that the average overall self-leadership strategies among faculty members at Najran university is at high level (M = 3.70 and SD = 0.34). while psychological empowerment (M=3.70; SD= 0.61). Although, there is a significant and positive relationship between psychological empowerment and the use of self-leadership strategies (r = 0.439; p <.01), mainly with the use of natural-reward strategies (r = 0.386\*; p <.01) and constructive thought patterns (r = 0.298\*; p <.01). On the other hand, it is determined that there is no significant relationship between psychological empowerment and behavioral-focused strategies (r = 0.233; p >.01). In addition, the correlations between all three dimensions are high and significant: behavior-focused strategies (r = 0.797; p <.001), natural-reward strategies (r =.787; p <.001), and constructive thought patterns strategies (r= 0.767; p

<.001). Therefore, the empirical data suggests these constructs of the model are both theoretically and empirically distinct.

*Question 2:* Are there any statistically significant differences at the level of (P=0.05) for self-leadership strategies among faculty members at Najran University due to (gender, academic rank, and years of experience)? To answer this question, concerning the Stepwise regression, an analysis used to assess whether there was

a significant relationship between the self-leadership strategies dimension and psychological empowerment after controlling for the effects of the demographical variables for gender, academic rank, and work experiences are presented in Table 3.

*Table 3. Findings of Stepwise regression Analysis Predicting Dependent Variables*

| Variables | | Demographical Variables | | | PE (IV) β | Adjusted R2 | F Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Gender β | Academic Rank β | Work Experiences β | | | |
| Behavior-focused strategies | Model 1 | -.042 | -.321** | .223 | - | 0.362 | 6.213 |
| | Model 2 | -.038 | -.319** | .226 | 0.043 | 0.364 | 5.015 |
| Natural-reward strategies | Model 1 | -.106 | -.326** | 0.277** | - | 0.393 | 7.543*** |
| | Model 2 | -.087 | -.316** | 0.307** | 0.307*** | 0.441 | 8.033*** |
| Constructive-thought strategies | Model 1 | -.001 | -.342*** | 0.219 | - | 0.304 | 3.340*** |
| | Model 2 | -.012 | -.335*** | 0.241 | 0.241* | 0.333 | 4.211*** |
| Self-leadership strategies | Model 1 | -.060 | -.359*** | 0.262** | - | 0.397 | 7.735*** |
| | Model 2 | -.046 | -.350 *** | 0.258** | 0.258* | 0.424 | 4.381*** |

The findings of the stepwise regression analysis showed that the two demographical variables have significant effect on explaining the variance of self-leadership strategies (Step 1) with academic rank of (β=-0.359, p <.001) and work experience of (β= 0.262, p <.01).while there is no effect on explaining the variance of self-leadership strategies and gender

(β= -.060, p >.01). When the effects of the self-leadership dimensions on the demographical variables and psychological empowerment among faculty members of Najran University are reviewed (Step 2), psychological empowerment did significantly contribute to general self-leadership strategies (β = 0.258, p <.01) while R2 significantly

increased from 39.7% to 42.4 % of the variance in general self-leadership (F = 7.735, p <.001). Thus, model 2 provides a better explanation of the individual differences that influence general self-leadership.

For specific details about the correlations among the variables, the findings found that natural-reward strategies (β = 0.307; p <.001) significantly explain 44,1 % of the variance in psychological empowerment (F = 8.033, p <.001), and constructive-thought patterns strategies (β= 0.241; p <.05) significantly explain 33,3% of the variance in psychological empowerment (F = 4.211; p <.001). Hence, Hypotheses H2b and H2c are accepted. However, a relationship was not found between behavior-focused strategies and general self-leadership (r =0.043). Hence, Hypothesis H2a is rejected. Moreover, the results revealed that gender did not significantly contribute to the general self-leadership strategies (β = -.046), the natural reward self-leadership strategy (β = -.087), or the constructive thought self-leadership strategies (β =-.012). Overall, Hypothesis 2 was only partially supported. Analysis of the results related to H2 indicated that in predicting psychological empowerment in a university, natural reward strategies and constructive thought patterns strategies have an effective role and can be indicated by a regression model.

**Discussion**

The aim of this research was to an analysis of the relationship between self-leadership strategies and psychological empowerment among faculty members at Najran University. For an in-depth understanding, it was observed that there is a positive and significantly correlated between all the variables, except for those of behavioral focused strategies. In the literature, behavioral-focused strategies, natural rewards, and constructive thought patterns are all under the domain of self-leadership strategies (Manz and Neck, 2004; Ahmed et. al., 2017 & Mentz, 2018). It can be argued that the obtained findings show a considerable similarity with the findings of the studies by Joo and Shim (2010), Neck and Manz (2010), and Laschinger et al. (2009); Al-Rouqi, (2016); Ahmed, et al. (2017); Al-Otaibi, (2017); and Thomas and Rahschulte, (2018), except for the significant and interesting difference on using the

behavior-focused strategy. Also, the faculty members with positive self-leadership strategies and psychological empowerment may encourage other faculty members to motivate themselves and use positive thinking to reframe experiences so they are better equipped to handle organizational challenges (Taştan, 2013 Ahmed et. al., 2017 & Mentz, 2018).

Moreover, behavior-focused strategies improve individuals' understanding of their job roles and their professional self-confidence as well as provide internal incentives, to thereby developing a sense of belonging and togetherness toward their university (Houghton and Yoho, 2005). While natural reward strategy explains intrinsic motivation and how individuals motivate themselves by building enjoyable aspects into their activities such as financial incentives and rewards (Neck and Houghton, 2006). The constrictive thought patterns strategies also involve positive ways of thinking (Neck and Houghton, 2006). Together, these strategies help to enhance the psychological empowerment of individuals (Hungton and Yoho, 2005; Rajaeepoor, et al., 2012; Al-Rouqi, 2016; Al-Otiby, 2017 & Thomas and Rahschulte, 2018).

Having behavior-focused strategies is significant, as such strategies increase one's level of awareness regarding one's own behavior and lead to behavioral change, thereby enabling an individual to set his or her goals more efficiently and improving their performance in the organization (Manz and Neck, 2004; Al-Rouqi, 2016; Ahmed, et al.,2017;Thomas and Rahschulte, 2018). When faculty members effectively take on such strategies, they improve their self-confidence and efficacy with a sense of commitment towards their role in the university but also for overall productivity and responsibility of their students. Thus, the absence of any impact from a behavioral strategy on psychological empowerment will lead to unsuccessful behavioral management among faculty members who demonstrate unproductive results in their jobs.

However, the participants in this study may not have awareness regarding the importance of these skills, which may have affected their overall productivity. In sum, these findings are significant for organizational leaders considering internal policies that allow employees more freedom and autonomy in

their work since such changes are likely to increase employee psychological empowerment. Further research is needed to explore the causes of this result.

According to the obtained result from H2, the findings revealed that there were no differences between self-leadership strategies and psychological empowerment regarding gender. The findings align with previous studies (e.g., Mentz, 2018) suggesting that there is no significant difference in self-leadership strategies based on gender.

The researcher explains that the faculty members work at Najran University have the same impact in doing their jobs, therefore, they earn more self-leadership strategies. Moreover, the findings indicated that a relationship exists regarding academic rank and work experiences. The results show that most faculty members have good self-leadership strategies. When the work experience increases, the use of this skill and its impact upon change are also enhanced. Hence, to make changes and achieve goals, careful targeted planning is needed, along with the confidence of faculty members to improve the quality of the education system. These results are consistent with the results of Rajaeepoor, et al., 2012 & Ahmed et. al., 2017 & Mentz, 2018).

Finally, natural reward and constructive thought pattern strategies are significantly affecting the psychological empowerment among faculty members in a positive direction. The research of other Saudi academics has also shown that psychological empowerment is related to more experience and respective responsibilities in the workplace, which increase as academic experiences increase (Al-Rouqi, 2016 &Jomah, 2017).

**Conclusion**
Self-leadership strategies can enhance the psychological empowerment of faculty members to experience positive change and to attain improved job performance and satisfaction. The results of this study indicate that natural reward strategies and constructive thought patterns are among the most important strategies that help to increase the psychological empowerment, among faculty members of Najran University. However, the results indicate that there is a lack of behavioral strategies,

which demonstrates those faculty members of Najran University awareness level regarding the importance of these skills is less, and their effects of overall performance and productivity. Therefore, educational institutions should encourage faculty members to set their own goals after self-assessment and should introduce new incentive plans as rewards. The results also show the importance of universities adapting and enhancing self-leadership skills, thereby improving their performance by training their employees in self-leadership strategies. Hence, organizations need to invest efforts in developing self-leaders in order to improve the overall functioning of the organization. These adjustments can lead to substantial improvements in the job performance of all faculty members and it ensures that they can create a habitually positive manner of thinking and perform their tasks, while enhancing their psychological empowerment; this will in turn benefit the institution by enabling it to obtain more effective and efficient results in the future. To this end, all members demonstrate self-leadership in one way or another. If the desired outcome from expanding freedom and autonomy among employees is that such individuals engage in strategies of self-leadership, then these findings provide empirical support for this approach. Further, employees are affected by their employer's attitude and behavior, which include management leadership style. The performance and personality of individual employees depend upon a supervisor's leadership qualities and style.

Moreover, differences in personality and nature between individual employees also have impact upon workplace functioning and dynamics. These topics require further research than could be investigated here. The findings contribute to the literature related to psychological empowerment as it offers another potential consequence, self-leadership strategies, for inclusion in future research.

**Limitations of the study**
The results of this study are subject to several limitations. These include its limited sample size and cross-sectional nature, which raises the possibility of common method variance. Attempts to replicate the study in other emerging Universities, should address these limitations, they should consider additional relationships such as between self-leadership strategies and psychological empowerment, and

incorporate with leadership styles of faculty members. Another limitation is that there is dependence on self-report data that lead to percept-percept inflation. A final limitation relates to the generalizability of the study. The study site consisted of faculty members working for one of emerging Saudi university. Therefore, additional data is needed from other emerging universities and other developed universities, in order to confirm whether these findings, conclusions and implications of the study may be generalizable to other Saudi Universities. Even though, these limitations are common in most empirical studies, they are not expected to distort the significant findings of the study.

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