



## A Recommended Perspective to Activate a Networked Leadership Practice Among Academic leaders at Northern Border University

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**Abstract:** This current study aims to recommend a perspective to activate a networked leadership practice among academic leaders at Northern Border University. A descriptive analytical approach is followed by means of developing a questionnaire. The research sample consists of 60 academic leaders (both male and female) at Northern Border University (including deans, agents, and heads of department). The statistical treatment was adopted: Arithmetic means and standard deviations of the second field of the questionnaire (in descending order). The results of the first question range from weak to moderate in relation to the human skills of network leadership. The results of the second field of the questionnaire show a medium degree in terms of 'It is related to the practice of network leadership', and the results from the third field reflect an average degree. In response to the second study question, the researcher developed a proposal to activate the network leadership at Northern Border University.

**Keywords:** Higher Education, Networked Leadership, Northern Borer University, academic leaders.

## **Introduction**

In light of the rise of the scientific and technological revolution and the knowledge explosion that the entire globe is experiencing, the current era is marked by rapid technological advancements in many fields and aspects. According to Al-Aghbry and Al-Melhem (2020), the success of any institution is largely determined by the calibre of its leadership, which forces educational institutions and other institutions to transition from more traditional systems of leadership to more contemporary ones and work to implement policies that are in line with the demands of the technological era. The Contemporary Observer witnesses numerous rapid advances as a result of the knowledge and technical boom, which has prompted organisations and businesses to face many obstacles, notably in the methods of administrative interaction (Al-Subaie & Al-Shehri, 2019).

It is critical for leaders and administrators to reconsider the methods used in institutional leadership toward achieving its goals, which has resulted in the development and progress of various methods and theories that may be suitable for some of the institutions in areas of development and which are presented in organisations (Al-Thubaiti & Faraj, 2022).

Many current organizations have had to develop and implement methods for leading in a new and completely different way than the old ones, so the multiplicity of factors that affect the work within organizations as a result of economic and information openness have reduced the organizations' control over the work environments within them, and complexity and entanglement have become a characteristic of these organizations. This openness has hindered these groups' ability to provide services, prompting them to pursue a policy of networking and partnerships (Yokus, 2022). Given the complexities of businesses, a new concept of leadership known as network leadership has emerged, which is a leadership style that caters to the complexity and multiplicity of factors affecting organizations. Network leadership is a sort of change leadership that involves context leadership and operations leadership (Marion, 2008). Mouton and Blake established a management network in which the leadership style is understood as representing a blend of "concern for output" and "concern for workers" (Leithwood, 2019). emphasis is on production in terms of the quality of decisions, innovative ideas, methods, and quality of production, as well as concerns that are based on trust and a good relationship between workers, and creating satisfaction, are based on their nature (King & McGowan, 2021).

Network leadership methods differ from traditional leadership in that network leadership focuses largely on behavior and role, and not on authority and position. It also values teamwork much more than traditional leadership methods and is highly concerned with providing facilities to complete work rather than control it. Entman (2018) emphasizes promoting equal relations and interdependence between workers, and not only interaction between them. The topic of network leadership is one of the most important in the present era, occupying a prominent position in educational, psychological, social, and administrative studies, and this type of leadership is one of the important means to organize all collective efforts and achieve the goals of those efforts (Smith, 2017).

The researcher believes that networked leadership among academic leaders can involve collaboration and coordination between administrators, faculty, students, and other stakeholders to create a dynamic, interconnected community of learners and practitioners, and the practice of networked leadership among academic leaders can involve a number of key strategies, including building relationships; Networked leaders

focus on building strong relationships with colleagues, students, and other stakeholders in order to create a supportive network of individuals who can work together to achieve common goals, collaborating across boundaries; networked leaders recognize the value of working with individuals and organizations outside of their own academic community, and seek to establish partnerships and collaborations that can lead to new insights, opportunities, and solutions.

As Yokus (2022) demonstrates, network leadership requires leaders to look beyond the unique flows and connections of informal organisations and processes. Network leaders comprehend how information travels through the intricate web of interdepartmental and intradepartmental links, as well as the hierarchy of the organisation. Through a process of self-regulation, network leadership, a type of non-hierarchical leadership, replacing the power structure with knowledge and experience. This process is held together by a mutual commitment that grows over time through consensus-based decisions (Spillan & Orlina, 2005).

The current state of organisations necessitates a leadership style such as network leadership, which is a diverse blend of leadership skills that includes relational and distributed leadership, as well as other successful modern leadership styles. The implementation of network leadership achieves task distribution, ease of information dissemination, and detachment from hierarchy, all of which contribute to the rapid and efficient completion of work (Coleman, 2012). Adopting the practice of networked leadership by constructing a scenario that may be implemented at the traditional level inside institutions, or online in times of crisis, inspired the current research.

Education leadership plays a crucial role in higher education. As leaders in the academic community, education leaders are responsible for setting the vision and direction for their institutions, and for guiding and supporting faculty, staff, and students in their efforts to achieve their goals, the role of educational leadership in higher education can be broken down into several key areas, including Strategic Planning; Education leaders work with stakeholders to develop and implement strategic plans that align with the mission and values of their institutions. This involves setting priorities, identifying opportunities for growth and innovation, and allocating resources to support initiatives that will advance the institution's goals, faculty and Staff Development; Education leaders play a key role in developing and supporting faculty and staff, providing opportunities for professional growth, and fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration. This includes initiatives such as mentoring programs, professional development opportunities, and opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration (Yokus, 2022).

Antonopoulou, Halkiopoulos, Barlou & Beligiannis (2022) also added the role of educational leadership in higher education student Success; Education leaders are committed to student success and work to create a supportive environment that promotes learning and helps students to reach their full potential. This includes initiatives such as student support services, career development programs, and opportunities for student engagement and leadership.

the researcher believes fulfilling these responsibilities, education leaders play a vital role in shaping the future of higher education, and in preparing students for success in the 21st century.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The lack of information required for decision-making, bureaucracy, the complexity and diversity of procedures, and the organizational conditions for administrative bodies as a result of the multiplicity of organizational levels and the dispersion of units all contribute to the severity of centralization, as well as divisions in an administrative

organization, repetition and duplication of specialties, impasse in regulations, and lack of technological progress (Kanaan, 2009). While leaders in university institutions, as represented by its faculties, departments, research centres, and various administrative divisions have traits and features that distinguish them from the leaders of institutions of productivity (Mahjoub, 2003), numerous studies, according to Saree (2019), highlight the need for a specific network leadership to facilitate interaction, member coordination and cooperation, maintain sustainability, and increase business effectiveness, in addition to managing member diversification and forming joint ventures based on members' voluntary commitment to achieving goals. According to Crosby and Bryson (2010), network leaders may play an important role in establishing conditions for network participants to operate and engage while also retaining the flexibility to produce and deliver results at network level.

Saudi universities require change because they are tasked with adopting network leadership, providing its requirements to apply at all levels from faculty member to head of department, the dean of the college, and university president, in order to face the immediate challenges for its survival, continuity, and attainment of its objectives. Al-Thubaiti and Faraj (2022) recommended additional research into the application of leadership principles in education. Further studies have emphasised the necessity of networked leadership in universities (Yokus, 2022; Sellami, Sawalhi, Romanowski & Amatullah, 2019; Maqableh, 2018).

The researcher believes Northern Border University (NBU) can benefit greatly from implementing networked leadership practices among its academic leaders. By leveraging the power of relationships and networks, Northern Border University can create a dynamic, interconnected community of learners and practitioners who can work together to achieve common goals and address challenges, by embracing these strategies, Northern Border University's academic leaders can cultivate a networked leadership practice that helps to build a more connected, collaborative, and dynamic university community. This can lead to improved student outcomes, increased innovation and research, and a stronger, more engaged community.

Based on the above, the researcher developed the current study's problem, which is titled "A recommended perspective to activate networked leadership practice among Academic leaders."

#### Questions of the Study

The problem of the current study also lies in its attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What is the reality of network leadership practice among the academic leaders of the Northern Border University?
2. What is the proposed vision for activating network leadership in Northern Border University?

#### Purpose of the Study

The current study aims to discover:

1. The reality of network leadership practice among the academic leaders of the Northern Border University.
2. Develop a proposed vision to activate network leadership at the Northern Border University

#### The Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is based on the significance of its issue, which is split into theoretical and practical significance:

### **Theoretical significance**

1. The study highlights the importance of practicing modern leadership methods that have already proven successful, especially network leadership.
2. The study may enrich educational literature with a new topic, as according to the researcher, there are not enough studies currently on the same topic.
3. Because there are few references or previous studies, this research has a clear value for the novelty of its topic, especially in the Arab context.

### **Scientific significance**

1. The findings of this study may demonstrate the benefits of network leadership, such as eliminating centralization, increasing synergies, and establishing networks for all areas of responsibility.
2. The field of education research, particularly the university, may be effective in applying modern leadership mechanisms and benefiting from them in improving the educational system functioning, and establishing the university system.
3. The findings of this study may provide a scenario for organizations other than educational institutions.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The current study has defined the following limits:

Time limits: This study was conducted in the academic year 2020/21

Geographical Limit: This research was conducted at the Northern Border University in the north of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Human Limits: This research applies to academic leaders at Northern Border University.

Objective limitations: The scope of this study was limited to the use of network leadership as indicated in the proposed perception.

The outcomes of this study were determined by the tool's validity and the required level of stability. In addition, the results were not generalised beyond the community from which the study's sample was drawn and similar communities, and they were determined based on the respondents' candour and objectivity when answering the study's questionnaire.

### **Definition of Terms**

The current study was determined by the following definitions:

**Networked leadership** - Spillane & Orlina (2005: 157) define networked leadership as a non-hierarchical kind of leadership in which information and experience replace the power structure through a process of self-organization linked together by commitment mutualism that evolves through time through consensus-based decisions. It is characterised by Sellami et al. (2019, p. 10) as a leadership style that directs organisations or individuals to work on addressing complicated challenges that are challenging to accomplish individually, without the leader having official control over individuals.

The researcher characterizes network leadership as a type of leadership that works at the level of operations, context, and workers so that the work is parallel in the form of networks and all efforts are poured in support of the operation and works to solve it at the same time. Existing problems and opportunities for improvement can be identified, and these networks can be designed to be followed up on, either at the university or electronically.

**Suggested proposal:**

Al-Sahli (2022: 206) is a general intellectual framework adopted by groups of researchers or educators in the form of fundamental assumptions, values, concepts, or interests concerning the human race, the universe, life, and society, as well as the dialectical relationships that exist between all subjects that guide researchers. research methods, as opposed to models and methodologies, are consistent with the formula that they use and its components. was characterised by the researcher as a framework that comprises stages and procedures for exercising network leadership in a way that promotes this practice, improves workflow, and achieves the desired result through its application.

**Northern Border University:**

This Saudi public university was founded by King Abdullah in the year 20 Rabi' al-Thani 1428 AH during his visit to the northern border. The administration and deanships of Northern Border University are based in Arar city and at the airport. While the university's faculties are spread across Arar, Rafha, and At-Turaif, the establishment of the Northern Border University was immediately followed by the creation of many new faculties, including medicine, pharmacy, nursing, applied medical sciences, engineering, computer science, business administration, as well as a community college (Northern Border University official website).

**Theoretical Framework**

The network leadership theory looks to be a leadership paradigm that connects the theories of participatory leadership with distributed leadership, but this is not the case. There is a substantial gap between these concepts, yet they have similarities with other leadership philosophies (Sellami et al., 2019). Silvia (2009) defines network leadership as a pattern based on directing a group of elements that are simultaneously autonomous from one another with the goal of reaching and achieving a goal that all elements desire to achieve, without working separately. While Smith (2008) defines it as a type of change leadership characterised by the activation of quick teamwork and the promotion of learning, which enables effective change response.

Yokus (2022) noted that network leadership is a leadership concept that bridges the theory of participatory leadership and the theory of distributed leadership. Although there are significant differences between these concepts, network leadership is similar to other theories of leadership with similar characteristics. Yokus (2022) described network leadership as a pattern based on managing a set of elements that are independent from one another with the goal of reaching and accomplishing a goal that all elements desire to achieve without working separately to achieve it. It is defined by Maqableh (2018) as a process that involves a dynamic interaction between people, and it may be considered in general as a process that is influenced by others to attain particular goals in a specific context.

From the foregoing views and definitions of network leadership, the following can be concluded:

Network leadership is the leadership of individuals or organizations with diverse cultures, experiences, and work-related practices. The objective of network leadership is to address issues that are challenging for individual network members to resolve alone.

The network leader's lack of official power over network members

The objective of network leadership is transformation and progress. Participants in the network leadership position benefit from the network's diverse elements.

Each style of leadership possesses characteristics connected to the mechanism of action and the application of the style, the most important of which for network leadership





are as follows (Marion, 2008; Sellami et al., 2019): Expansion: This refers to the addition of new individuals and organizations to the network, which facilitates the exchange of varied ideas.

Coordination across sectors: This is represented by eliminating the gaps between the various sectors by developing an organizational structure that contributes to the integration of these sectors in order for them to work in a coordinated manner.

Capacity Building: Networks provide the infrastructure required to complete the work, through a shared vision among network parties, through which the organization's challenges are identified, as this is a continuous process which is based on improving the organization's ability to face challenges and keep up with developments.

Kanaan (2009) added:

Reducing independent work: In order to benefit from the influence of collaboration, network leadership necessitates the organization and its leaders to take a broad vision that extends beyond their personal interests and interests, so that there are avenues for collective accountability.

Long-term mindset: This characteristic indicates that this leadership style can only thrive by considering long-term solutions.

3- Group communication: This is communication that takes place between network members, and constructive conversation is one of the primary pillars that leads to the achievement of the goals of this type of communication.

Network leadership has five characteristics. This is considered to be a distinct type of leadership because it consists of a combination of leadership talents that are being built in order to benefit from human resources, and is designed by building a model that demonstrates these elements (Antonopoulou et al., 2021):

Reliable leadership: As a component of network leadership, this style of leadership involves an individual's awareness of both their positive and negative qualities. This style of leader is concerned with establishing long-term relationships, and seeks to disseminate positivity among employees, such as empowerment, respect, and trust (Antonopoulou et al., 2021).

Relational leadership: This is one of the leadership models that focuses on the idea that effective leadership is based on the leader's ability to provide positive relationships within the work organization, so that the world in general is based on building relationships, and is one of the primary models that represent success. This works by unlocking the capabilities of the organization's workers and constructing partnerships so that leadership is represented by the relationship, as in the absence of the relationship, there is no leader, and therefore leaders will fail. There is value in the importance of cooperation, help, and teamwork in order to fulfil the organization's objectives (Antonopoulou et al., 2021).

Distributed leadership: This is a modern style of leadership which focuses on the distribution of power with the goal of expanding the sphere of influence and influence over employees in order to utilize their talents, abilities, and capabilities. One individual and the rest of the team members working alongside the leader are provided with the opportunity to assume leadership roles in positions that allow them to exhibit their competence, participate in the decision-making process, and become a part of the organization's leadership (King, F., & McGowan, 2021)

Political leadership refers to the ability to manage relationships and formulate work strategies within a network. It is related to the state's policy and influenced by political shifts within the state, as well as the strategic relationships of the network's partners, so that it is consistent with all the specifics of the job at the level of individual network workers and their interaction with them (King, F., & McGowan, 2021)

**Formative leadership:** This type of leadership is concerned with the process by which the context of cooperative work is determined, which is influenced by how different visions of work functions are determined, shedding light on the relational and uncertain nature of both leadership and organizational life, while emphasizing the role of authority in the work and the reality of the work. This provides all network members with a clear image of what is expected of them and defines what others should expect. It emphasizes on how the leader establishes the network and the expectations that come with it, as well as the requirement for strong communication skills and the capacity to comprehend the perspectives of others (King, F., & McGowan, 2021)

This demonstrates the significance of network leadership in educational administration in light of the numerous factors that influence the educational process and its constant change, due to social media, the family, all educational staff members, including teachers, supervisors, leaders, and faculty members, all having a significant impact on the extent to which the educational process is facilitated. The significance of network leadership in educational administration can be found in several areas (Ospina, 2017):

Building capacity for continuous growth and development.

Developing leadership work by leading and developing a large number of employees.

Working to improve and support the educational process, which is shared by all educational departments, in order to boost standards.

Network leadership corresponds with the educational process vision's main orientations of improving education planning, evaluating, and improving outcomes through the promotion of knowledge exchange, performance evaluation, and a stimulating work environment.

Network leadership approaches can be classified according to the networked leadership dimensions outlined by Sellami et al., (2019):

**Activation** is demonstrated by treating all network members the same way, identifying all network resources, identifying the primary stakeholders, and putting network members' proposals into action (Sellami et al., 2019).

**Framing:** The practices of the network leader in the aspect of framing are to share the leadership role with network members, and with their participation, to establish a common vision, to ensure that network members understand their individual roles, to allow network members to determine their own process for achievement, and to influence the values and principles to use in the network, as exemplified by the members adhering to the rules and standard legislation (Sellami et al., 2019).

**Mobilization:** The network leader's approach is to provide support from the top of the network, maintain the network's good standing with the appropriate authorities, and build enthusiasm for the successful completion of a specific project (Sellami et al., 2019).

**Synthesis:** A network leader's practices include freely sharing information among network members, working for the benefit of network members and building trust among them, encouraging network members to use their personal ideas and opinions to solve problems, and maintaining network cohesion, as well as scheduling work tasks and coordinating work in the network and maintaining a rapid rate of progress in the work (Sellami et al., 2019).

Many studies have been conducted on the topic of network leadership, including Al-Sahli (2022), who developed a set of proposed procedures that contribute to achieving the requirements of applying network leadership as an approach to establishing an organizational affiliation culture at Kuwait University. The descriptive approach was employed in the research, and the current study found that network leadership is significant in developing a culture of organizational affiliation in universities. It also





provides frameworks for the professional development of alliances and professional partnerships both internally and externally, as well as the development of a professional system to investigate organizational knowledge and information at all levels, with a goal of generating knowledge and ideas through the detection of administrative and academic talents at the institution's level.

From their perspective, Al-Thubaiti and Faraj (2022) identified the degree of network leadership practice among the heads of academic departments at Taif University, with a study sample of 79 participants. According to the study's findings, the degree of network leadership practice among Academic leaders is 'high', and there are no statistically significant differences between the responses of the study community members relating to the required variables (gender, number of years of experience). Because of the variable, there are statistically significant disparities in the responses of the study community members (academic rank).

Al-Amiri and Al-Mutairi (2020) investigated the reality of educational supervisors' network leadership practice and strategies to improve them from the perspective of secondary school leaders in Riyadh. The descriptive survey approach was utilized in the study, and the questionnaire was used to collect information. The study sample included 357 leaders, and the findings concluded that the reality of educational supervisors' application of network leadership from the perspective of secondary school leaders in Riyadh was moderate, with no statistically significant differences between the average responses of study community members regarding their appreciation of the reality of educational supervisors' application of leadership. The network was based on academic qualification, years of experience, and study community approval, on approaches to strengthen the use of networked leadership dimensions among educational supervisors to a high degree.

Antonopoulou et al., (2021) evaluated the level of network leadership behavior practiced at Kuwait University and Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences from the perspective of Kuwaiti workers, to determine if there were statistically significant differences related to the variable (gender, years of experience). The descriptive strategy was employed by the researcher. The survey and questionnaire were administered to 372 administrative personnel from Kuwait University, and the results revealed that the degree of practicing network leadership behavior was medium, with no statistically significant differences owing to gender or years of experience.

Maqableh (2018) explored if there were statistically significant differences related to the variable in the degree of availability of network leadership requirements at Taif University from the perspective of faculty members (gender, academic rank, years of experience). The study sample included 308 participants. Taif University's teaching faculty and the researcher utilized the descriptive analytical approach to meet the study's aims, with a questionnaire as the study tool. This resulted in favor of the male category, and there are statistically significant variations in the field of administrative and cultural needs related to the academic rank variable in favor of the associate professor category.

In terms of goal, the current study differs from other previous studies in that it sought to build a recommended horizon for activating the practice of network leadership among Academic leaders. Al-Thubaiti & Faraj's (2022) study identified the degree of network leadership practice among the heads of academic departments at Taif University from their point of view, and Al-Amiri & Al-Mutairi (2020) study executed the actuality of female educational supervisors' network leadership practices. Antonopoulou et al., (2021) study examined the extent to which network leadership behavior is practiced at Kuwait University and the Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences from the



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perspective of Kuwaiti personnel. Maqableh (2018) evaluated the availability of network leadership requirements at Taif University from the perspective of faculty members in her study.

The current study agrees with all prior studies in terms of using the questionnaire as a study tool, as well as in terms of employing the descriptive analytical approach to achieve the study's purpose.

This current study differs from earlier studies in that it is, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, the first to address the topic of a proposed horizon to activate the practice of network leadership among Academic leaders, a vision for activating network leadership at Northern University. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the current study is one of the first to deal with the practice of network leadership among Academic leaders at the Northern Border University, in the north of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with previous studies being used to build the study tool and theoretical framework.



## **Method and Procedures**

### **Study Method**

The descriptive strategy was used by the researcher for the study method. According to Creswell (2019), this is a research method that outlines the characteristics of the sample or phenomena researched and emphasizes on the "what" of the study topic rather than the "cause" for the research subject. He explains that the descriptive research approach focuses mostly on defining the nature of the slide in terms of demography, rather than the "cause" of the occurrence of a certain phenomenon, and "describing" the subject of the research, rather than the "cause" of its occurrence.

### **Participants of the Study**

The research sample included all academic leaders at Northern Border University, a total of 60 deans, agents, and heads of departments, both male and female.

### **Instruments of the Study**

For the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study, a questionnaire was developed, after reviewing the theoretical literature and previous studies. This consisted of 37 questions. The researcher modified the questionnaire and extracted it in its final form, after formulating its questions in simple language, adding a number of questions, and deleting some until it was ready in its final form (36 questions).

A Five-Point Likert Scale (Strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, neutral = 3, disagree = 2, strongly disagree = 1) was employed by giving each item a score ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The following scale was adopted to analyze the results:

- 1.00–2.33                      Low
- 2.34–3.67                      Moderate
- 3.68–5.00                      High

By using the following equation:

The highest limit (5) – the lowest limit (1)

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Number of categories (3)

1-5 = 1.33

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3

And adding (1.33) to the end of each category.

### **Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire**

The validity of the questionnaire instrument was evaluated for the goals of the current study through the validity of the content, which was retrieved by presenting it to six arbitrators from professional backgrounds. Educational administration, measurement, and assessment will be verified by directing a letter of arbitration to them. The statements' suitability in connection to each axis, their validity in assessing what they were intended for, the clarity of the dimensions covered in the questionnaire, and the scientific formulation of the statements are all covered.

After completing the arbitration of the questionnaire and making the arbitrators' proposed amendments, several phrases were formulated, others were modified, and some were replaced, until the questionnaire reached its final form of 36 questions valid for application to the study sample, after its reliability was verified. The researcher considered the following factors when developing the questionnaire:

1. Create statements that are straightforward, clear, and focused so that they are simple to comprehend.



2. Considering the respondent's time so that completing the questionnaire does not take longer than necessary.

To guarantee the tool's validity and reliability, the researcher calculated the reliability coefficient of the resolution, as well as the internal consistency between its paragraphs (Cronbach's alpha coefficient). This resulted in a stability coefficient of (0.79) for the tool as a whole, indicating the tool's stability. Table (1) displays the value of the resolution's reliability coefficient (the search tool) for each axis independently before displaying the total value.

**Table 1**

*Validity and Stability of the Tool*

| Scope of Networked Leadership                                                                               | No. of phrases | Cronbach's alpha coefficient |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| Availability of networked leadership human skills of your supervisor                                        | 15             | 0.83                         |
| Availability of technological requirements for implementing networked leadership within your department     | 10             | 0.75                         |
| Availability of administrative requirements for the application of network leadership within the department | 11             | 0.66                         |
| Total                                                                                                       | 36             | 0.74                         |

Table 1 clearly shows that the total stability coefficient of the tool is equal to (0.74), which is an acceptable number for scientific research.

Statistical methods used to process research data

The data (the participants' questionnaire responses) were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software programme in order to conduct statistical analyses to answer the various research questions, including the one-way variance test, Cronbach's alpha coefficient arithmetic averages, and standard deviations.

### **Study Procedures**

The various procedures carried out for this study are listed below:

1. Review of the theoretical literature and previous studies relating to the subject
2. Developing the study tool and testing its validity and reliability with appropriate methodologies
3. Obtaining a directed letter of facilitation
4. Distribution of the questionnaire tool to the study sample
5. Questionnaires were obtained from the study population and all answers were examined. Incomplete questionnaires were removed, bringing the total number of correctly completed questionnaires to 60.
6. Presenting and explaining the outcome in a single chapter, and comparing those results with the studies.
7. Create relevant recommendations based on the results obtained.



### **Findings of the Study**

#### **Results relating to the first question: What is the reality of network leadership practice among the academic leaders of the Northern Border University ?**

To answer this question, the recommended network leadership practice requirements' arithmetic averages and standard deviations were calculated within the research tool's axes. The tables below show the arithmetic averages and standard deviations for each axis's paragraphs, as well as the axis's overall arithmetic mean.

**Table 2**

*Arithmetic means and standard deviations of the first axis paragraph for the questionnaire - Availability of human skills of networked leadership of your supervisor (arranged in descending order)*

| <b>Order</b> | <b>Phrase</b>                                                                                                                                  | <b>Mean</b> | <b>S.D.</b> |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1            | Ability to use necessary technology, such as smart phones and computers                                                                        | 3.28        | .76         |
| 2            | Possesses motivation for achieving group goals (section)                                                                                       | 2.88        | .97         |
| 3            | Possesses positive high thinking that enables him to cooperate and intertwine with the parties necessary to cooperate for departmental benefit | 2.77        | 1.0         |
| 4            | Consistently works to receive knowledge and continuous learning                                                                                | 2.67        | .79         |
| 5            | Extended vision and ability to foresee the future                                                                                              | 2.62        | .64         |
| 6            | Works on the policy of exchange benefit                                                                                                        | 2.47        | 1.09        |
| 7            | Facilitates teamwork and simplifies application procedures                                                                                     | 2.20        | 0.54        |
| 8            | Possesses courage to take risks if it leads to the common good                                                                                 | 2.16        | 0.72        |
| 9            | Possesses the ability to self-manage while interacting with subordinates                                                                       | 1.98        | 0.98        |
| 10           | Personally, impacts others both inside and outside his department                                                                              | 1.78        | .82         |
| 11           | Communicates effectively with others                                                                                                           | 1.73        | .70         |
| 12           | Ability to think systematically                                                                                                                | 1.65        | .60         |
| 13           | Not tyrannical and accepts differences with others                                                                                             | 1.60        | 0.86        |
| 14           | High levels of flexibility when dealing with those around him                                                                                  | 1.55        | 0.82        |
| 15           | Discusses future vision with others                                                                                                            | 1.53        | 0.70        |
| Total axis   |                                                                                                                                                | 2.08        | 0.72        |

The arithmetic averages for the first field of the questionnaire range from - to 1.53 3.28, as shown in Table 2. The phrase 'ability to use necessary technology, such as smart phones and computers' obtained the highest arithmetic mean of 3.28, with a standard deviation of 0.76, indicating that the leaders' ability to use modern smart technology is now one of the most important factors of business follow-up, especially in the networked leadership approach, which is one of the recent trends for educational leaders to be aware of. Leadership and technology tools aid in the establishment of the concept of expansion and interdependence, which is essential in network leadership. Technology tools, such as smart phones, aid in the increase of interaction and communication between groups, the activation of social ties between members of a single organization, and the formation of a network of relationships.

Next, the phrase, 'Possesses motivation for achieving group goals (section)', shows an arithmetic mean of 2.88 and a standard deviation of 0.97, which indicates that networked leadership leaders possess the motivation and enthusiasm to achieve the goals of the institution, especially the university, where network leadership encourages faculty members to be self-sufficient and creates a kind of enthusiasm through its ability to ease any restrictions and limits imposed by traditional leaders. It also fosters commitment and cooperation rather than competition, while some may be hesitant to adopt this trend of talking about leadership due to a fear of change and a thought that it will necessitate a significant amount of effort, work, and time on their part.

Referring to the two phrases, 'High levels of flexibility when dealing with those around him' and 'Discusses future vision with others,' the arithmetic means are 1.55 and 1.53,

with standard deviations of 0.82 and 0.70, indicating the presence of stagnation and adherence to the leaders' opinions, which necessitates an awareness of the networked leadership approach and the university's need for it. This result may be due to educational leaders' lack of awareness of how to apply network leadership properly, as well as their lack of belief in the importance of applying this modern trend in leadership. A lack of capabilities and expertise that contribute to the application of expansion and linking between educational institutions to form a network of relationships between them may occur. Furthermore, leaders lack the behaviors that contribute to employee motivation in the organization and improve their practices to support the network system. The reality of practicing networked leadership regarding the second field - 'Availability of technological requirements for implementing networked leadership within your department' is discussed next.

**Table 3**

*Arithmetic means and standard deviations of the second field of the questionnaire (in descending order)*

| NO          | Phrase                                                                                                                                                        | Mean | SD   |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| 1           | Each employee has a smart-phone that connects to the boss                                                                                                     | 2.93 | 1.15 |
| 2           | The presence of a group on the most prominent applications (WhatsApp, for example) that enables the exchange of information and opinions about the department | 2.83 | 1.18 |
| 3           | Employees are allowed to access the Internet                                                                                                                  | 2.82 | 1.16 |
| 4           | Employees have email accounts to use                                                                                                                          | 2.76 | 1.03 |
| 5           | Availability of sufficient computers in the department                                                                                                        | 2.76 | .87  |
| 6           | Equipped technological network available linking each department to senior management                                                                         | 2.70 | 1.11 |
| 7           | Network of workers can communicate individually or collectively through applications such as Telegram, IMO, or others                                         | 2.67 | 1.08 |
| 8           | Possibility to use technologies that help the network of employees, such as Zoom, video conferencing, and others                                              | 2.67 | 1.02 |
| 9           | Strong internet connection available                                                                                                                          | 2.60 | 1.08 |
| 10          | Database that makes it easy for workers to obtain necessary information                                                                                       | 2.53 | .91  |
| Whole scope |                                                                                                                                                               | 2.7  | 1.05 |

Table 3 clearly demonstrates that the arithmetic averages for the second item of the questionnaire range from - 2.93 to 2.53, indicating a moderate level of networked leadership practice. The phrase 'Each employee has a smart-phone that connects to the boss', on the other hand, received the highest arithmetic mean, estimated by 3.28, with a standard deviation of 0.76, indicating that network leadership is primarily dependent on the availability of communication tools such as smartphones, and that smart phones help to implement networked leadership requirements, as well as the spread of smart phones and the number of teachers who own them becoming a feature of modern times, which is why this statement received the highest appreciation.

The sentence 'Database available that makes it easier for workers to obtain necessary information' follows. The arithmetic mean is 2.53 and the standard deviation is 0.91. This conclusion can be explained by the fact that most educational institutions lack a suitable technical infrastructure, and school administrators do not supply software for keeping data in an organized manner, making it difficult to transfer and benefit from it. Also, because some software is pricey and is not offered by educational institution administration, this paragraph received the lowest intermediate Arithmetic score.

The reality of practicing networked leadership regarding the third field is the availability of administrative requirements for the application of network leadership within the department.





**Table 4**

*Arithmetic means and standard deviations of the questionnaire's third field statements (arranged in descending order)*

| NO                 | Phrase                                                                                                                                    | Mean        | SD          |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1                  | The department embraces the value of teamwork and stays away from individual work                                                         | 3.99        | 0.85        |
| 2                  | The department has a culture of information exchange                                                                                      | 3.99        | 0.98        |
| 3                  | Coordination takes place between the concerned authorities within one department and between the department and the other, as needed      | 3.98        | 0.99        |
| 4                  | Decisions are made on the basis of an exchange of opinions to reach the best decision                                                     | 3.85        | 0.90        |
| 5                  | The department's senior management adopts the sharing of material and human resources within the department and between other departments | 3.62        | 1.00        |
| 6                  | There is coordination between the department and the community bodies that need to be dealt with                                          | 3.5         | 0.71        |
| 7                  | The work is carried out as collective, interlocking, and reciprocal                                                                       | 3.24        | 1.08        |
| 8                  | Organizing workshops and training programs to develop competencies                                                                        | 3.22        | 1.00        |
| 9                  | Moving away from the hierarchical administrative structure                                                                                | 3.17        | 1.02        |
| 10                 | Adopting a system of rewards and incentives to encourage employees                                                                        | 3.11        | 0.82        |
| 11                 | Support for decentralized administrative department regulations                                                                           | 2.17        | 1.18        |
| <b>Total field</b> |                                                                                                                                           | <b>3.44</b> | <b>0.95</b> |

As shown in Table 4, the arithmetic mean of the overall field is 3.44, indicating that networked leadership among leaders occurs to a medium degree. The arithmetic averages for the third field of the questionnaire range from - 3.99 to 2.17, indicating that this falls within the middle degree, with the exception of the phrase, 'Support for decentralized administrative department regulations', which had a mean of 2.17, indicating the presence of centralized leadership among department leaders.

This conclusion can be explained by the fact that certain existing educational institutions are striving to accomplish the values of cooperative labour among themselves in order to increase the state's cohesion and provide complete support for politics, law, and the economy. There is a necessity to maintain the element of variation and diversity in the administrative functions of these directorates. The departments also strive to collaborate with individuals responsible for the educational process within their respective directorates, including the director, supervisor, and instructor, in order to unify the objective and effectively distribute work. This is the foundation of network leadership, while some educational institutions still adhere to outdated thought patterns and rely largely on centralization in decision-making to monitor units and directorates for comprehensive and precise administration.

Results relating to the Second What is the proposed vision for activating network leadership in Northern Border University?

The results relating to the second question, which asks 'what is the proposed vision for activating network leadership at Northern Border University? In order to answer this question, the researcher developed a prospective proposal according the following steps:

- Review of the empirical studies that chose network leadership as a style of leadership, and whose results validated its performance, with an emphasis on Arabic studies

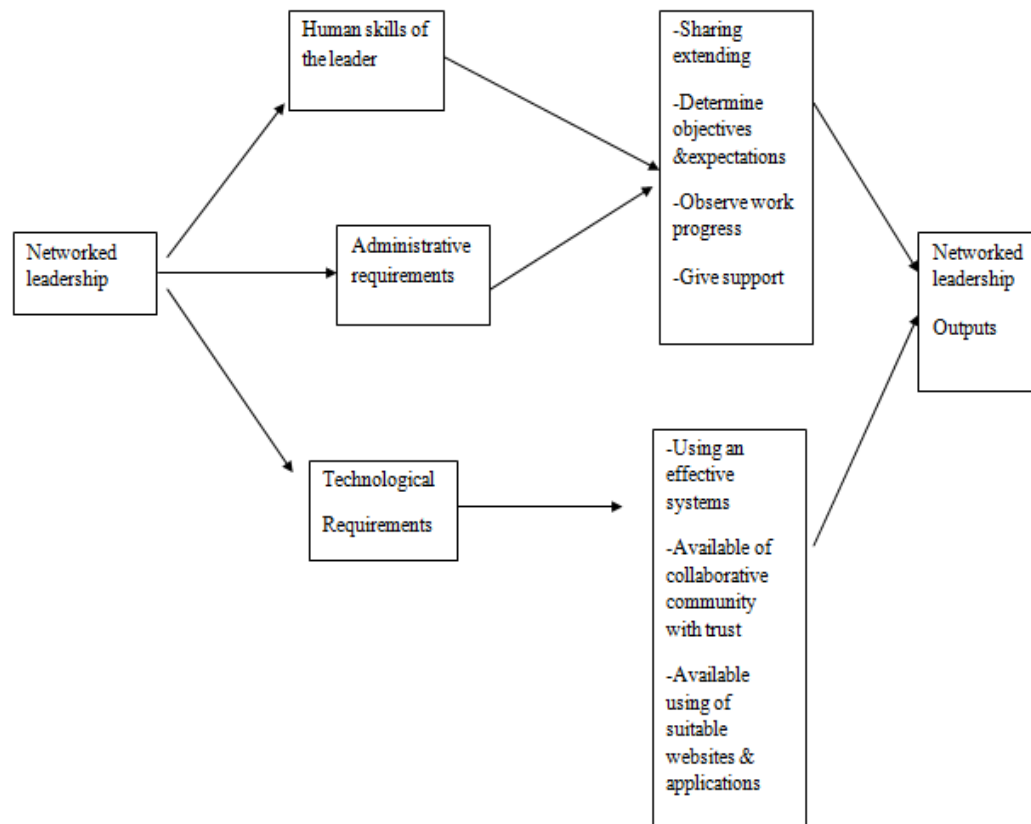
- Review the results of the first question regarding the weak points of network leadership in practice

Prospective proposal for activating network leadership at Northern Border University:

The proposed prospective can be summarized as follows form:

**Figure 1**

*Prospective Proposal for Activating Network Leadership*



### Recommendations

Recommendations and suggestions: In light of the study's findings, the following recommendations and proposals are provided:

1. Enhancing the concept of network leadership by hosting workshops and training courses with a greater emphasis on the practical than the theoretical, and by increasing the channels for cooperative training between all educational institutions.
2. Conducting educational seminars on the issue of network leadership for faculty members at private universities so that they are aware of this leadership and its potential use in institutions.
3. Conducting a correlational analysis between network leadership and administrative variables such as staffing levels (organizational confidence, morale, organizational climate, employee job performance).
4. Directing the group's management to adopt decentralised management and eliminate bureaucracy in the workplace in order to implement networked leadership



### **Conclusion**

Following a review of the research in the field of networked leadership and its application to a sample from the University of the Northern Borders, it is clear that a shift in leadership patterns is necessary. Due to the current challenges faced by leaders, this study has indicated the proposed vision to activate the network leadership at Northern Border University in order to capitalise on the network's resources, including political leadership, dependable leadership, distributed leadership, and formative leadership.

As a result of the rapid change, we are witnessing in the contemporary day, organizations in their old form are no longer able to adapt, necessitating the transition of new administrative and leadership patterns. To build the proposal, the researcher examined the results of the first question concerning the inadequacies of network leadership practice in the real world. In addition, he analyzed the experimental research that chose network leadership as a leadership style, as their outcomes validated its success, particularly in Arab studies. The researcher created a viable proposal as a result.



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