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## The role of entrepreneurial leadership in decreasing the level of work pressure among academic leaders in Jordanian universities: An empirical study on Jordanian government universities

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### Abstract

This study examines the role of entrepreneurial leadership in reducing work pressure among academic leaders in Jordanian public universities. Using a descriptive-analytical approach, a survey was conducted with 57 academic leaders to assess work pressure levels and the impact of entrepreneurial leadership traits such as innovation, autonomy, and resilience. The findings indicate that academic leaders experience moderate levels of work pressure, with no significant differences based on college, academic rank, or experience. Entrepreneurial leadership fosters adaptability, proactive decision-making, and improved communication, contributing to stress reduction. Key strategies for alleviating work pressure include enhancing communication, providing administrative support, and fostering collaboration. The study concludes that entrepreneurial leadership plays a crucial role in mitigating work pressure by equipping academic leaders with problem-solving skills, resource management capabilities, and strategic decision-making. From a practical perspective, universities should implement targeted interventions such as mental health programs, stress management training, and institutional policy adjustments to create a more supportive work environment. Future research should further explore the impact of administrative workload and institutional policies to develop sustainable solutions for reducing stress among academic leaders.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial leadership, Government universities, Management policies, Organizational climate, Work pressures.

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**Transparency:** The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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## **1. Introduction**

During contemporary circumstances, work pressures (working stress) have increased, with causes varying in quantity and nature. They have become a characteristic feature of the modern era, often regarded as ailments resulting from civilizational progress. These pressures persistently threaten and undermine both the psychological and physical health of individuals. Modern organizations, whether businesses or service providers, have shown increased interest in this phenomenon. It has been established that these pressures substantially impact the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations in achieving their objectives. Organizations strive diligently to maintain continuity, survival, growth, and development. Such achievements can only be realized through confronting external variables, succeeding, interacting, adapting to them, and leveraging their existence to drive towards the accomplishment of organizational goals. This involves addressing internal pressures and attempting to alleviate or eliminate them by seeking to satisfy the needs of the individuals working within the organization. Providing a comfortable work environment is essential for gaining their loyalty, commitment, and increasing their job satisfaction levels.

Moreover, the topic of work pressures serves as a contemporary entry point for studying modern organizations in the field of social sciences. Organizations aim to achieve their objectives through human efforts, considering humans as the most valuable and essential elements of production within these entities. Consequently, any dysfunction affecting individuals due to work pressures directly reflects on the organization's performance and its ability to adapt to a changing environment, ensuring its survival and continuity [1, 2].

Studies indicate that the work pressures experienced by employees not only affect their health and psychological well-being, leading to cases of mental and physical imbalance but also have a direct impact on their job performance and ability to work. This, in turn, reflects on the workflow within organizations and institutions, hindering the process of achieving their goals. Consequently, modern organizations have been prompted to address the challenges posed by work pressures. There is now a focus on administrative pressure, its determinants, various aspects, and the concepts, attitudes, motivations, perceptions, skills, and capabilities associated with it. All of this occurs within a rapidly changing environment [3, 4].

Stress represents a natural response to dealing with sudden changes in the environment. It is a type of physical or psychological response to an external event or situation that imposes material and physiological constraints on the individual, causing a deviation from normal performance. Psychological pressures resulting from work-related stress lead to a sense of bad mood, consequently resulting in a loss of motivation for work. This, in turn, leads to a loss of enjoyment in personal life, physical illnesses, signs of reduced concentration, and a lack of attention to one's surroundings and work [5, 6].

Educational institutions, like other organizations, strive to reduce work pressures and actively implement strategies for managing professional stresses [7]. This is aimed at enhancing the ability of these institutions to efficiently achieve their goals by investing in the capabilities of individuals to deliver their best performance. Additionally, organizations provide individuals and institutions with the necessary tools for managing professional stress, which is considered one of the most significant impediments to performance in educational institutions [8].

Entrepreneurial leadership holds a crucial role in alleviating work pressure among academic leaders in universities through various strategies [9]. Firstly, by fostering a culture of innovation, entrepreneurial leaders encourage the introduction of novel solutions that streamline processes, diminish administrative burdens, and enhance productivity. Secondly, they excel in resource management, ensuring efficient allocation to provide academic leaders with the necessary support without overwhelming constraints. Thirdly, by empowering academic leaders with autonomy and decision-making authority, trust in their expertise is cultivated, leading to increased confidence in handling challenges and reducing stress. Fourthly, entrepreneurial leaders cultivate collaborative work environments, fostering teamwork, idea sharing, and support among academic leaders, thereby mitigating feelings of isolation and stress. Additionally, they prioritize work-life balance through flexible policies and initiatives, promoting well-being and reducing burnout. Moreover, by aligning goals with the university's mission and vision, clarity is provided, aiding academic leaders in task prioritization and focus, consequently decreasing overwhelm and uncertainty. Lastly, entrepreneurial leaders invest in the professional development of academic leaders through training, mentorship, and skill enhancement opportunities, equipping them to manage responsibilities effectively [10-12]. In essence, entrepreneurial leadership fosters an environment of support, empowerment, and effectiveness, ultimately leading to reduced work pressure among academic leaders in universities.

Modern administrations in educational institutions are now obligated to find scientifically applicable solutions with the aim of eliminating or mitigating work pressures to enhance performance and achieve educational objectives [13, 14].

Educational leaders in these institutions must work on improving their performance, attempting to establish a positive relationship between the impact of work pressures and performance, and addressing and mitigating their effects on individuals and the organization. Dealing with professional pressures begins with reducing their resulting effects, identifying organizational sources, and addressing any dysfunction in the implementation of the administrative system.

This study investigates the impact of entrepreneurial leadership on reducing work pressures among academic leaders in Jordanian government universities. It assesses stress levels from their perspective and examines differences based on college affiliation, years of experience, and academic rank. Additionally, the research aims to empirically explore how entrepreneurial leadership practices contribute to alleviating stress and workload, offering insights into effective leadership strategies within Jordanian higher education institutions.

This study is expected to benefit educational leaders in institutions, particularly in educational directorates and schools, by providing valuable insights into work pressures. It may offer feedback on stress levels in educational settings and effective mechanisms to mitigate them. Additionally, the study could help leaders, administrators, and teachers understand the causes of work pressures, develop strategies to address them, and implement measures to maintain control, ultimately improving the overall work environment.

## 2. Literature Review

Several studies have explored work pressures in educational institutions and the role of educational leadership in mitigating them. These studies also examined strategies to improve performance and achieve job satisfaction.

Najm AL-Din and Abdul Rahman [15] investigated the relationship between work pressures and job satisfaction among technical supervisors in Iraq's school sports directorates. Using a descriptive survey method with 279 supervisors, they found that work pressures and dissatisfaction with incentives negatively affected self-esteem and professional relationships.

Lamitoui and Drdoun [16] studied the impact of occupational stress on the pedagogical performance of 60 physical education teachers in Algeria. Their findings indicated that occupational stress had a detrimental effect on teaching performance. Similarly, Mahmoud, et al. [17] developed a theoretical framework to measure work stress among 190 teachers in Egypt, confirming the reliability and validity of their scale.

Habri and Jalgli [18] examined the relationship between organizational climate and work stress among 70 employees in Algeria's public treasury. Their study revealed a significant correlation between these factors. In Jordan, AL-Ali [14] assessed work stress levels among school principals in Bani Obeid's Directorate of Education from the teachers' perspective. Surveying 313 teachers, the study found high levels of stress among school principals and recommended strategic interventions.

Maas, et al. [19] analyzed the link between teachers' perceived time pressure, emotional exhaustion, and social support from school principals. Using longitudinal data from 1,071 Swiss teachers, their findings highlighted principal support as a crucial resource in reducing stress. Meanwhile, Hindr [20] explored the relationship between job pressures, role ambiguity, and job stress among 80 employees in Tripoli's Social Solidarity Fund. The study found a strong connection between increased job pressure and heightened stress.

Oteer [21] examined work stress among 130 teachers in Palestinian schools implementing an anti-violence program. The study found weak professional development opportunities, strained teacher-administration relationships, student-related problems, and financial burdens. Hysa [22] explored educational leadership styles in Albania and their impact on teachers' job stress. Findings indicated no single leadership style significantly reduced stress, emphasizing the need for adaptive leadership approaches.

Agai-Demjaha, et al. [23] assessed work-related stress levels among 300 primary school teachers in North Macedonia. Results showed that stress increased with age and varied with teaching experience. In Jordan, Almahsneh [24] identified poor working conditions as the primary source of occupational stress among 280 schoolteachers, followed by personal and employment-related factors, and lack of institutional support.

Al-Zoubi, et al. [2] investigated work pressure and decision-making effectiveness among 205 university department heads in Middle Eastern higher education. The study found a strong correlation between work pressure intensity and decision-making efficacy, with female faculty members exhibiting better decision-making skills than their male counterparts. The research emphasized the need for universities to implement stress-reduction strategies and foster supportive work environments.

These studies collectively highlight the significant impact of work pressures on educators' job performance, satisfaction, and overall well-being. They also underscore the importance of effective leadership, institutional support, and targeted interventions to mitigate stress in educational institutions.

## 3. Research Questions

Employees in educational institutions, especially leaders, are more susceptible to psychological pressures compared to others due to the inherent ambiguity of their roles, the multitude of conflicting demands, and the continuous exposure to stressful situations. Additionally, the financial aspect adds to the burden on teachers, given the increased material requirements associated with modern life. This necessitates the exploration and remedy of any deficiencies [1, 4, 16, 25].

Most workplace pressures arise either from organizational sources related to the work itself or the organization or from external sources outside the work environment that accompany the individual into the workplace, negatively impacting their performance and productivity. Therefore, most modern organizations require conscious and progressive leadership that seeks to develop administrative organization comprehensively to keep pace with the rapid changes occurring in society. It is essential to pay significant attention to the human element, as it is the key to the organization's success in performing its functions and achieving its goals. Hence, the research problem arises in addressing the following questions:

- 1- What is the level of work pressure among academic leaders in Jordanian universities from their perspective?
- 2- Is there a difference in the mean responses of the study participants regarding the level of work pressures among academic leaders in Jordanian universities from their perspective, based on the variable of the college?
- 3- Is there a difference in the mean responses of the study participants regarding the level of work pressures among academic leaders in Jordanian universities from their perspective, based on the variable of years of experience?
- 4- Is there a difference in the mean responses of the study participants regarding the level of work pressures among academic leaders in Jordanian universities from their perspective, based on the variable of academic rank?
- 5- What is the impact of entrepreneurial leadership on reducing work pressure among academic leaders in Jordanian government universities?

## 4. Methodology

This study employs a descriptive-analytical methodology, focusing on analyzing and describing the phenomenon while examining its connections to related factors and contexts. The researchers utilized relevant information sources and developed a questionnaire based on the theoretical framework and previous research for data collection. The study targeted educational

leaders in Jordanian government universities, specifically department heads and college deans, during the first semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. A convenient sample of 60 leaders was selected, with 57 valid responses analyzed statistically.

The study utilized a questionnaire to collect data on work pressure among academic leaders in Jordanian universities. Developed based on theoretical literature and previous studies, the questionnaire comprised 30 items across four domains, using a five-point Likert scale. To ensure validity, the initial 25-item version was reviewed by eight university experts, leading to modifications and finalization at 30 items. Reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha, with domain coefficients ranging from 0.77 to 0.85 and an overall reliability of 0.89, indicating strong internal consistency. Data were collected, encoded, and analyzed using SPSS, employing statistical methods such as frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, independent sample t-tests, and ANOVA.

**Table 1.**

Shows the distribution of the study sample individuals based on the independent variables.

Variable	Variable category	Number	Percentage%
Faculty	Humanities	34	59.6
	Science	23	40.4
	Total	57	100
Academic Rank	Assistant prof.	28	49.1
	Associate prof.	16	28.1
	Prof.	13	22.8
	Total	57	100
Experience	<5 years	15	26.3
	5-10 years	8	14
	>10 years	34	59.6
	Total	57	100

## 5. Results and Discussion

This study aimed to assess work pressure levels among academic leaders in Jordanian universities from their perspective and examine whether significant differences exist based on college, academic rank, and years of experience. To achieve this, a validated and reliable questionnaire was developed for data collection. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS, with statistical interpretations based on a grading scale: a GPA of 4 or higher was considered very high, 3.5 to 3.99 high, 3 to 3.49 average, 2.5 to 2.99 low, and below 2.5 very low.

### 5.1. Results related to the first question: What is the level of work pressure among academic leaders in Jordanian universities from their perspective?

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations for the items related to the level of work pressure among academic leaders in Jordanian universities from their perspective were calculated. The results are presented in Table (2).

**Table 2.**

Mean and Standard Deviation for Items Related to the Level of Work Pressure Among Academic Leaders.

Rank	Item no.	Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of Pressure
1	2	Work pressure related to the physical environment.	3.39	0.996	Medium
2	4	Work pressure related to role burden.	3.30	0.886	Medium
3	1	Work pressure related to the students.	3.23	0.926	Medium
4	3	Work pressure related to an academic member.	2.96	1.085	Medium
Total			3.2193	0.81019	Medium

Table 2 indicates that academic leaders in Jordanian universities perceive their work pressure as moderate, with an average mean score of 3.21 and a standard deviation of 0.81. Among the different types of work pressure, the physical environment ranked highest, followed by role burden, student-related pressures, and faculty-related pressures, all considered average. The researchers attribute these findings to supportive university policies, collaborative workplace culture, sufficient resources, and the effective use of technology and administrative systems. Additionally, well-organized institutional structures and positive communication between academic and administrative staff contribute to reducing work pressure.

### 5.2. Results Related to the Second Question: Is there a difference in the mean responses of the study sample regarding the level of work pressure among academic leaders in Jordanian universities from their perspective, according to the variable of the college?

To answer this question related to the college variable, researchers relied on using the independent sample t-test. The results of this analysis can be observed in Table 3.

**Table 3.**

Displays the results of the t-test for independent samples to identify significant differences in the mean responses of the study sample regarding the level of work pressure among academic leaders in Jordanian universities from their perspective.

Domain	Faculty	NO.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Value of (T)	Significance Level
Work pressure related to students.	Humanities	34	3.12	0.808	-1.916	0.06
	Science	23	3.57	0.945		
Work pressure related to the physical environment.	Humanities	34	3.21	0.914	-0.812	0.82
	Science	23	3.26	0.964		
Work pressure related to an academic member.	Humanities	34	2.79	0.914	-1.459	0.150
	Science	23	3.22	1.278		
Work pressure related to role burden.	Humanities	34	3.29	0.970	-0.845	0.40
	Science	23	3.52	1.039		
Total	Humanities	34	3.1029	0.723	-1.327	0.19
	Science	23	3.3913	0.913		

Note: \*Statistically significant at the significance level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

Table 3 showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the perceived work pressure among academic leaders in Jordanian universities based on the college variable, as the p-value exceeded 0.05, with an overall significance level of 0.19. The researchers attribute this to the similar organizational structures, nature of work, and global conditions across colleges, leading to a homogeneous perspective on work pressure. Additionally, the unified government administration, consistent strategies for managing work stress, and a shared university work culture contribute to the similarity in responses among academic leaders.

*5.3. Results Related to the Third Question: Is there a difference in the mean responses of the study sample regarding the level of work pressure among academic leaders in Jordanian universities from their perspective according to the academic rank variable?*

To answer the following question, the researchers used a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the samples, and the results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.**

Results of One-Way ANOVA for the Significance of Differences in the Mean Responses of the Study Sample regarding the Level of Work Pressure among Academic Leaders in Jordanian Universities from their Perspective according to the Academic Rank Variable.

Domain	Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F-Value	Significance level
Work pressure related to students.	Sum Squares between groups	1.292	2	0.646	0.818	0.447
	Sum squares within groups	42.637	54	0.790		
	Total	43.929	56			
Work pressure related to the physical environment.	Sum Squares between groups	0.414	2	0.207	0.226	0.792
	Sum squares within groups	47.622	52	0.916		
	Total	48.036	54			
Work pressure related to an academic member.	Sum Squares between groups	3.773	2	1.887	1.639	0.204
	Sum squares within groups	62.157	54	1.151		
	Total	65.930	56			
Work pressure related to role burden.	Sum Squares between groups	0.599	2	0.300	0.295	0.746
	Sum squares within groups	54.909	54	1.017		
	Total	55.509	56			
Total	Sum Squares between groups	0.166	2	0.083	0.122	0.885
	Sum squares within groups	36.593	54	0.678		
	Total	36.759	56			

\*Statistically significant at the significance level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

Table 4 specified that there is no significant difference in perceived work pressures among academic leaders in Jordanian universities based on academic rank, with a p-value of 0.88, exceeding 0.05. Researchers point this out as indicative of the uniformity in work conditions, responsibilities, and the integrated nature of academic roles across ranks. Regardless of rank, academic leaders share similar challenges, participate equally in decision-making and administrative duties, and operate



within a university culture that promotes equality and collaboration, leading to a convergence in their perspectives on work pressure.

*5.4. Results related to the fourth question: Is there a difference in the mean responses of the study sample regarding the level of work pressure among academic leaders in Jordanian universities from their perspective according to the variable of years of experience?*

To answer the previous question related to years of experience, the researchers used One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the samples. The results are as shown in [Table 5](#).

**Table 5.**

Results of the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the significance of differences among the means of responses from the sample individuals in the study. The study focuses on the level of work pressure among academic leaders in Jordanian universities from the perspective of their calculated variable, years of experience.

Domain	Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F-Value	Significance level
Work pressure related to students.	Sum Squares between groups	1.092	2	0.546	0.688	0.507
	Sum squares within groups	42.838	54	0.793		
	Total	43.930	56			
Work pressure related to the physical environment.	Sum Squares between groups	0.743	2	0.371	0.424	0.656
	Sum squares within groups	47.292	54	0.876		
	Total	48.035	56			
Work pressure related to academic member.	Sum Squares between groups	6.596	2	3.298	3.002	0.058
	Sum squares within groups	59.334	54	1.099		
	Total	65.930	56			
Work pressure related to role burden.	Sum Squares between groups	2.242	2	1.121	1.136	0.329
	Sum squares within groups	53.267	54	0.986		
	Total	55.509	56			
Total	Sum Squares between groups	1.319	2	0.659	1.005	0.373
	Sum squares within groups	35.440	54	0.656		
	Total	36.759	56			

[Table 5](#) proved that there is no significant difference in perceived work pressure among academic leaders in Jordanian universities based on years of experience, with a p-value of 0.37, exceeding 0.05. The researchers attribute this to strong interaction and integration among leaders, leading to shared experiences in handling work pressure. Despite varying experience levels, academic leaders operate under the same ministerial policies, job conditions, and responsibilities. Additionally, similarities in problem-solving abilities and work challenges may overshadow differences in experience, while other influential factors could play a more significant role in shaping perceptions of work pressure.

## 6. Conclusion

Entrepreneurial leaders possess vision, creativity, resilience, and a willingness to challenge norms, enabling them to navigate uncertainty and drive innovation. By fostering an entrepreneurial culture, they promote initiative, autonomy, and adaptability, which can help alleviate work pressure in government universities. This can be achieved by encouraging continuous improvement and innovation, securing additional resources or administrative support, and enhancing communication to facilitate problem-solving. Additionally, improving work-life balance through mental health programs, conducting studies to analyze work pressure factors, and offering stress management and time management training can further support academic leaders in managing their responsibilities effectively.

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