



The Psychosocial Formation of Leadership: From Scouting Education to University Leadership in the Experience of the Presidency of Al-Jafara University (A Desk-based Analytical Study)

Abtisam Ali Mohammed Raqeeq *

Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education, Al-Zahra, Aljafara University, Libya
ebtisam@aju.edu.ly

التكوين النفسي الاجتماعي للقيادة من التربية الكشفية إلى القيادة الجامعية في تجربة رئاسة
جامعة الجفارة: دراسة تحليلية مكتبية

ابتسام علي بالرقم *

قسم علم النفس، كلية التربية الزهراء، جامعة الجفارة، ليبيا

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الملخص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة المسارات النمائية التي تنمى من خلالها القدرات القيادية قبل تولي الفرد منصباً قيادياً رفيعاً في الجامعة. وبتركيز على التعليم الكشفى كنموذج للتعليم غير النظامي، يبحث البحث في كيفية إسهام التعلم التجريبي، وخدمة المجتمع، والمسؤولية الجماعية في النضج النفسي والاجتماعي. وانطلاقاً من فرضية تحليلية دقيقة، تفترض الورقة البحثية أن التجارب الكشفية قد تُعزز سمات قيادية حاسمة، مثل الذكاء العاطفي، وحل المشكلات بفعالية، والالتزام الأخلاقي، والقدرة على التكيف، دون افتراض وجود علاقة سببية حتمية بين المشاركة المبكرة في الكشفية والنجاح اللاحق في رئاسة الجامعة. وباستخدام منهجية تحليلية مكتبية، تُركّز الدراسة على دمج الأدبيات من علم النفس الاجتماعي، والقيادة التربوية، والتعليم غير النظامي، إلى جانب مراجعة نقدية للوثائق المؤسسية المتاحة للجمهور من جامعة الجفارة. ويشير التحليل إلى أن الانتقال من القيادة الكشفية إلى الإدارة الجامعية ليس مجرد نقل للمهارات، بل هو إعادة صياغة معقدة للتجربة. على الرغم من أن الوثائق المؤسسية تحدد التوقعات التنظيمية للحوكمة التعاونية والمشاركة المجتمعية، إلا أنها لا تزال غير كافية لتحديد السمات النفسية الفردية أو عزو الإنجازات المؤسسية مباشرة إلى التجارب التكوينية لرئيس الجامعة. وتختتم الورقة البحثية بالدعوة إلى إجراء بحوث تجريبية مستقبلية تستخدم التحليل السير الذاتية والمقابلات لسد الفجوة بين الخطاب المؤسسي والتطور النفسي والاجتماعي للفرد.

الكلمات الدالة: التكوين النفسي والاجتماعي؛ الهوية القيادية؛ تعليم الكشفية؛ الذكاء الاجتماعي والعاطفي؛ القيادة الجامعية؛ جامعة الجفارة؛ دراسة مكتبية.

Abstract

This study examines the developmental pathways through which leadership capacities are cultivated prior to an individual assuming high-level university office. Focusing on scouting education as a

paradigm of non-formal learning, the research investigates how experiential learning, community service, and collaborative responsibility contribute to psychosocial maturation. Adopting a cautious analytical premise, the paper posits that scouting experiences may foster critical leadership attributes such as emotional intelligence, active problem-solving, ethical commitment, and adaptability without assuming a deterministic causal link between early scouting participation and subsequent success in a university presidency. Utilizing a desk-based analytical methodology, the study synthesizes literature from social psychology, educational leadership, and non-formal education, alongside a critical review of publicly available institutional documents from Al-Jafara University. The analysis suggests that transitioning from scouting leadership to university administration is not a mere transfer of skills, but a complex recontextualization of experience. While institutional documents outline organizational expectations for collaborative governance and community engagement, they remain insufficient for establishing individual psychological traits or attributing institutional achievements directly to the university president's formative experiences. The paper concludes via advocating for future empirical research utilizing biographical analysis and interviews to bridge the gap between institutional discourse and individual psychosocial development.

Keywords: Psychosocial formation; leadership identity; scouting education; social and emotional intelligence; university leadership; Al-Jafara University; desk-based study.

1. Introduction

Leadership does not spontaneously manifest upon an individual's appointment to a formal executive role; rather, it is the culmination of cumulative psychosocial and educational experiences [1]. While formal academic training provides the technical and administrative scaffolding necessary for institutional management, the foundational architecture of leadership identity is often constructed much earlier [2]. This paper explores the continuum of leadership development, specifically examining the bridge between non-formal scouting education and the complex demands of university presidency. Scouting occupies a unique developmental space [3]. Operating at the intersection of formal education and unstructured life experiences, it functions as a laboratory for socialization. Through its emphasis on learning via doing, peer collaboration, and community service, scouting exposes individuals to early iterations of responsibility, conflict resolution, and ethical decision-making [4], [5]. The academic literature often treats these formative experiences as a generalized "value-add" without critically analyzing the specific psychosocial mechanisms at play. How do the informal, voluntary structures of a scout troop translate into the formal, legally bound, and highly bureaucratic environment of a modern university?

To investigate this transition, this study utilizes the institutional context of Al-Jafara University in Libya as an analytical lens. Via examining the university's official discourse, strategic objectives, and structural requirements, alongside theoretical frameworks from social and educational psychology, this paper seeks to map the psychosocial demands of university leadership against the developmental offerings of scouting education.

2. Statement of the Research Problem

A prevalent assumption in educational and psychological discourse is that the soft skills cultivated in youth organizations seamlessly transfer to adult executive roles. Consequently, discussions surrounding scouting often reduce its impact to a generalized positive influence or a mere checklist of transferable skills. This approach obscures the complex psychosocial transformations required to move from informal peer leadership to formal institutional authority [4], [5], [6]. The core problem this research addresses is the lack of critical analysis regarding how specific psychosocial traits developed in scouting contexts are recontextualized within the demanding environment of higher education leadership [7], [8]. Without dissecting the specific psychological and social mechanisms involved, the narrative risks becoming purely anecdotal.

Therefore, the central inquiry of this paper is twofold: First, what specific psychosocial and cognitive capacities does scouting education foster? Second, how can these capacities be analytically mapped onto the institutional and leadership requirements of a university presidency, specifically within the context of Al-Jafara University, while acknowledging the epistemological limits of desk-based document analysis?

3. Significance and Objectives of the Study

The theoretical significance of this study lies in its integration of social psychology, non-formal education, and higher education leadership. It challenges the trait-based view of leadership, advocating instead for a developmental and social identity perspective [9], [10]. Practically, the research offers insights for educational policymakers and university boards regarding the hidden value of non-formal educational backgrounds in executive selection and leadership development.

The primary objectives of this inquiry are to:

- Deconstruct the concept of psychosocial formation in leadership, moving beyond isolated personality traits to understand leadership as a socially embedded process.
- Identify the specific cognitive, emotional, and social capacities fostered by scouting education.
- Analyze the continuum and structural differences between informal scouting leadership and formal university administration.
- Critically read the institutional documents of Al-Jafara University to identify the psychosocial and leadership demands implied via its strategic vision.
- Delineate the methodological limits of using public documents to attribute institutional success to an individual's formative experiences.

4. Methodology and Data Sources

This study employs a desk-based analytical methodology. It relies on the critical reading and synthesis of secondary literature and primary institutional documents, rather than direct empirical data collection such as psychological testing, surveys, or interviews. The data sources are divided into two categories [11]. The first comprises theoretical and empirical literature concerning social identity, emotional intelligence, active intelligence, and the psychological impacts of scouting. The second category consists of publicly available official documents from Al-Jafara University, including its founding decree, strategic mission statements, and organizational structures. It is imperative to state the epistemological boundaries of this approach. Institutional documents reflect organizational discourse and aspirational goals; they do not serve as psychological evaluations of the university president [12]. This study does not attempt to prove a direct causal relationship between the president's scouting background and the university's administrative success. Instead, it uses the documents to establish the requirements of the role, mapping them against the potential developmental outputs of scouting education to understand the nature of the leadership transition.

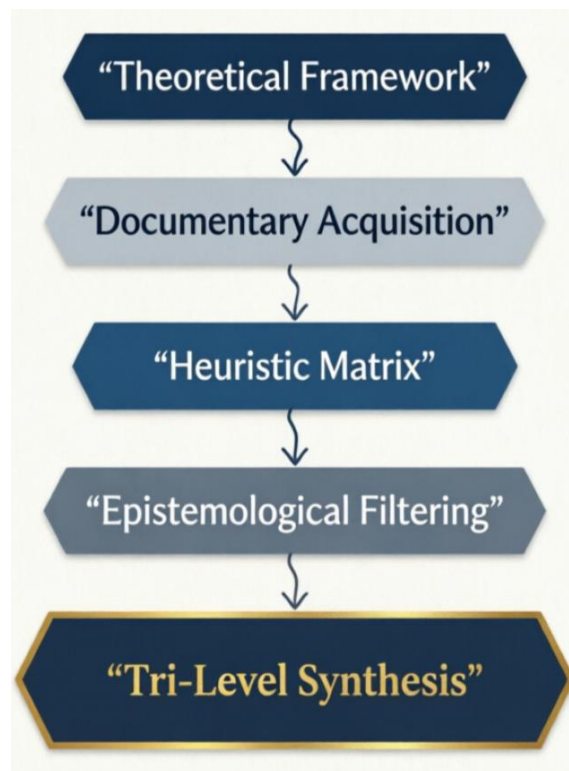


Figure 1 . A Qualitative Research Methodology Workflow

Figure 1 above illustrates the systematic analytical process employed in this desk-based study examining the psychosocial formation of leadership from scouting education to university presidency. The process begins with establishing a theoretical framework grounded in social psychology, leadership identity, and non-formal education literature, followed via documentary acquisition of publicly available institutional materials from Al-Jafara University. The heuristic matrix serves as the core analytical tool, enabling systematic cross-tabulation between scouting-derived leadership capacities and university leadership requirements. Epistemological filtering then applies critical boundaries to distinguish between institutional discourse and individual psychological attributes, preventing deterministic causal claims [13]. Finally, the tri-level synthesis integrates findings across individual psychological resources, formal authority reinterpretation, and structural contextual adaptation, producing a nuanced understanding of leadership transition that acknowledges both developmental continuity and contextual recontextualization.

5. Theoretical Framework

5.1 Psychosocial Formation and Leadership Identity

Leadership cannot be reduced to a static collection of personal traits; it is a dynamic psychosocial process [1]. The psychosocial formation of an individual involves the continuous interaction between internal psychological development and external social structures. In the context of leadership, this means that a leader's identity is not formed in isolation but is forged through relationships, cultural contexts, and institutional responsibilities [2]. Contemporary psychological perspectives, particularly social identity theory, argue that effective leadership relies less on personal distinctiveness and more on the ability to represent and advance a shared group identity. A leader succeeds not via imposing personal will, but via embodying the collective values and aspirations of their community [3]. This shifts the analytical focus from "who the leader is" to "how the leader navigates and shapes the social fabric of their organization. The psychosocial formation of leadership emerges from the continuous, dynamic interplay between an individual's

internal cognitive processes and the external societal structures they navigate [4]. Rather than viewing leadership merely as the possession of isolated personal traits, contemporary psychological frameworks emphasize it as a socially embedded process rooted in shared group identities [5]. Within this paradigm, a leader's identity is forged not through the unilateral issuance of commands, but through the cultivation of collective meaning and the demonstration of genuine empathy [6]. Through this lens, leadership identity crystallizes via social recognition and active engagement, where the individual learns to balance the distribution of resources with the ethical demands of their community [7]. This developmental trajectory distinguishes authentic leadership from mere administrative authority, positioning it instead as a profound commitment to communal service rather than personal dominance. Via navigating complex interpersonal dynamics and ethical challenges, the aspiring leader internalizes a resilient identity capable of adapting to shifting organizational landscapes. Fundamentally, the psychosocial maturation of a leader is defined via their capacity to seamlessly integrate personal accountability with the collective aspirations of the communities they serve [8].

5.2 Emotional, Social, and Active Intelligence

The transition from informal to formal leadership requires a sophisticated blend of intelligences. Emotional intelligence the capacity to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and those of others is critical for navigating the high-stress environment of university administration. Social intelligence extends this to the macro level, involving the acute awareness of organizational dynamics, power structures, and stakeholder expectations. Active intelligence is highly relevant in this context [9]. Unlike static academic intelligence, active intelligence involves the practical application of knowledge to solve novel, ill-defined problems in real-world settings [10]. It encompasses adaptability, tacit knowledge acquisition, and the ability to learn from experience. University presidents must constantly deploy active intelligence to balance academic ideals with financial realities, bureaucratic constraints, and community needs [11]. Within the complex landscape of higher education administration, emotional intelligence serves as the foundational mechanism through which leaders navigate intricate interpersonal dynamics and high-stakes pressures [11]. Complementing this internal regulation, social intelligence extends the executive's cognitive reach outward, enabling a profound comprehension of institutional cultures and the nuanced social fabrics that bind diverse academic communities [12]. Yet, possessing these relational capacities remains insufficient without the deliberate application of active intelligence. This specific cognitive faculty empowers the leader to translate tacit knowledge into pragmatic, real-world problem-solving strategies, a necessity vividly illustrated via the transition from informal scouting environments to formal university presidencies [13]. Rather than operating as isolated psychological traits, these faculties must intertwine to foster a resilient leadership identity capable of mediating conflicts and sustaining ethical governance amidst bureaucratic complexities. Consequently, the university president must continuously leverage this integrated intelligence to balance immediate operational crises with long-term strategic visions, ensuring institutional objectives align with broader community service mandates [14]. Synthesizing emotional empathy, social acuity, and active adaptability transforms abstract leadership potential into a tangible, socially embedded practice that drives meaningful educational impact.

5.3 Scouting Education as a Developmental Context

Scouting is fundamentally a system of non-formal education. Its pedagogical model is built on experiential learning, where values are not merely taught but practiced. The scouting method emphasizes the patrol system (peer-led micro-communities), learning via doing, and immersion in nature and community service [15]. Psychological studies indicate that participation in scouting significantly correlates with the development of self-esteem, social skills, and academic

resilience. The environment forces youths to practice conflict resolution, resource sharing, and collective decision-making in a low-stakes, high-support setting [16]. Scouting instills an ethical framework centered on tolerance, mutual assistance, and civic duty, laying the groundwork for what would later be conceptualized as ethical leadership. Scouting education functions as a vital non-formal developmental context that transcends traditional classroom boundaries via prioritizing experiential learning and practical application [17]. Through its foundational principle of learning via doing, it immerses youth in real-world projects that require them to conceptualize, execute, and evaluate their initiatives independently. This continuous cycle of action and reflection significantly enhances psychological resilience, fostering self-reliance, behavioral regulation, and the constructive management of failure [18]. The scouting environment cultivates essential social competencies via mandating active collaboration, role-sharing, and the peaceful resolution of interpersonal conflicts [19]. Via deeply embedding core values such as tolerance, mutual assistance, and civic duty into daily practices, the movement transforms abstract ethical concepts into lived experiences. However, while this structured yet flexible environment provides an optimal incubator for leadership traits, it does not automatically guarantee the emergence of a capable leader without considering individual differences and environmental support. Scouting lays a robust psychosocial foundation that equips individuals with the adaptive social skills and emotional intelligence necessary to navigate complex leadership roles later in life [19].

5.4 Leadership and the Culture of Service

Ethical leadership is characterized via the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, promoting such conduct to followers through two-way communication. In scouting, service is not an abstract concept; it is a daily practice [1]. This early immersion in volunteerism and civic duty helps internalize the principle that authority is inextricably linked to responsibility and service to others, rather than the exercise of power or the pursuit of personal gain. Within the psychological framework of ethical leadership, the culture of service transcends mere administrative duty to become a profound commitment to justice, responsibility, and the equitable distribution of resources. In scouting education, this service-oriented mindset takes root through active community engagement, teaching youths that authority is inherently linked to volunteerism rather than personal privilege [20]. As this identity transitions into higher education, the ethos of service must evolve into rigorous academic integrity, transparent resource management, and a deep responsiveness to the broader environment. True ethical leadership within a university setting, is not validated merely via an administrator's participation in charitable events or the issuance of generalized institutional slogans. Instead, it demands a critical evaluation of how leaders navigate actual crises, the alignment between their public rhetoric and tangible actions, and the fairness embedded in their daily decisions. This continuous alignment fosters a deeply internalized moral compass. Embedding a genuine culture of service transforms abstract ethical ideals into measurable, socially responsible practices that sustainably benefit all stakeholders [21].

6. The Transition Mechanism: From Scouting to University Leadership

Moving from a scouting context to a university presidency is not a simple scaling up of the same skills; it is a fundamental recontextualization of experience. This transition can be understood through three analytical levels:

Level 1: Transfer of Psychological Resources

At the foundational level, the individual transfers core psychological resources developed in scouting. These include basic communication skills, the capacity for teamwork, resilience in the face of logistical challenges, and a baseline commitment to collective goals. The scout who learned to mediate a dispute between peers has developed the foundational cognitive schema for

conflict resolution, which remains relevant in a university setting [22]. At the foundational level of leadership transition, the primary mechanism involves the direct migration of core psychological resources cultivated during early scouting experiences. These internalized assets encompass fundamental interpersonal capacities, specifically effective communication, active listening, and the nuanced ability to foster peer cooperation. The individual also brings forth a deeply ingrained sense of behavioral adaptability alongside a profound emotional attachment to a collective mission [23]. A demonstrated willingness to bear responsibility and engage in collaborative teamwork serves as a critical psychological bridge between informal youth guidance and formal academic administration. Viewing these traits not as static characteristics but as dynamic cognitive schemas developed through experiential learning reshapes understanding of executive readiness. The aspiring university leader therefore seamlessly integrates these foundational social competencies into their new, highly complex institutional environment. This initial transfer of psychological resources establishes the vital interpersonal groundwork necessary for navigating the multifaceted relational demands of higher education governance [24].

Level 2: Reinterpretation of Resources within Formal Authority

The second level involves adapting these resources to a context of formal, legal authority. In scouting, authority is largely voluntary and persuasive; a scout leader leads because the youth choose to follow and respect the shared code. In a university, the president wields statutory authority, managing budgets, enforcing academic regulations, and navigating national higher education laws [25]. The psychological resource of "persuasion" must now be integrated with "administrative execution." The leader must reinterpret their collaborative instincts through the lens of bureaucratic accountability. At the second analytical level, the leader must fundamentally reinterpret their foundational psychological resources to operate effectively within a framework of formal statutory authority [26]. Unlike the voluntary and persuasive dynamics characteristic of a scouting environment, university administration demands the exercise of legally binding executive power. The informal collaborative instincts that once facilitated peer cooperation must now be carefully recalibrated to navigate complex bureaucratic accountability. The psychological capacity for persuasion can no longer rely solely on shared moral codes; it must be seamlessly integrated with rigorous administrative execution and institutional compliance [27]. This transition requires the executive to balance their innate empathetic engagement with the stringent demands of academic, financial, and legal governance. Via recontextualizing these interpersonal skills, the leader transforms voluntary teamwork into structured organizational management without losing the core ethos of service. This profound reinterpretation ensures that the psychological resources forged in informal settings remain robust enough to sustain the multifaceted responsibilities of formal university leadership [28].

Level 3: Structural and Contextual Adaptation

The final level addresses the sheer complexity of the new environment. A university is a multidimensional organization comprising diverse faculties, administrative bodies, student unions, and external stakeholders (government ministries, local communities, international partners). The leader must transition from managing a homogenous peer group to orchestrating a highly differentiated, often fragmented, academic community [20]. This requires advanced political acumen, strategic foresight, and the ability to manage complex institutional conflicts that have legal and financial ramifications. At the third analytical level, the transition demands profound structural and contextual adaptation to navigate the sheer complexity of a multidimensional academic environment [21]. Unlike the voluntary nature of a scouting troop, a modern university operates as a highly differentiated institution comprising diverse, often fragmented faculties. Consequently, the executive must evolve from managing simple peer

dynamics to orchestrating intricate institutional ecosystems governed via rigid legal and financial frameworks [22]. This paradigm shift necessitates specialized organizational knowledge alongside advanced political acumen to mediate multifaceted stakeholder conflicts effectively. Furthermore, the leader must seamlessly integrate foundational empathetic traits with the stringent demands of formal statutory authority and bureaucratic accountability [23]. Navigating this labyrinthine landscape requires strategic foresight to balance immediate operational crises with long-term institutional objectives and community mandates. Mastering this structural adaptation ensures that the executive can effectively translate informal collaborative instincts into sustainable, large-scale academic governance [24].

7. Contextual Application: The Experience of Al-Jafara University

To ground this theoretical framework, we examine the institutional context of Al-Jafara University. Established in (2015) as a non-profit, regional institution in the Jafara basin, the university's foundational documents emphasize the dissemination of knowledge, scientific research, and community service.

7.1 Institutional Requirements and Social Intelligence

The university's strategic documents highlight the need for institutional diversification and the management of multiple faculties across a wide geographic area. This structural reality demands a high degree of social and organizational intelligence from the presidency. The leader must foster a shared identity among disparate academic departments, ensuring that the university functions as a cohesive entity rather than a collection of isolated faculties. The participatory and collaborative skills nurtured in scouting find their institutional equivalent here in the necessity of building consensus among deans, faculty members, and administrative staff [24].

7.2 Community Service as a Core Value

A prominent theme in Al-Jafara University's mission is community service and regional development. While the direct, hands-on service of a scout (e.g., environmental clean-ups, local aid) differs in scale and mechanism from university-level community engagement (e.g., applied research, public health initiatives, policy advising), the underlying psychological driver is identical. Both require a shift from self-interest to collective welfare. The university president must champion a culture where the institution is viewed as an active, responsible citizen within the Jafara region, translating the scouting ethos of "doing a good turn daily" into institutional policy.

7.3 Participatory Governance and Stakeholder Engagement

The university's official discourse emphasizes participatory decision-making and the engagement of stakeholders. In a formal academic setting, this translates to the establishment of university councils, faculty boards, and committees. The psychological capacity for collaboration learned early in the patrol system must now be operationalized within rigid parliamentary and administrative procedures [25]. The leader must facilitate dialogue, manage competing academic interests, and ensure that decision-making is both inclusive and legally compliant.

7.4 Critical Reading of the Institutional Documents

A critical analysis of Al-Jafara University's public documents reveals a strong alignment with the values of ethical leadership, transparency, and social responsibility. The documents advocate for justice, the equitable distribution of resources, and the fight against administrative corruption. These are the exact ethical pillars emphasized in scouting education. However, it is vital to maintain analytical rigor: the presence of these values in the university's strategic plan reflects institutional aspirations and legal requirements, not direct psychological proof of the president's character. The documents outline the role's requirements, not the individual's formative history.

8. Analysis and Discussion

The synthesis of the theoretical framework and the institutional analysis reveals that leadership is a multidimensional construct operating across various levels of complexity. The comparison between the developmental outcomes of scouting and the institutional demands of Al-Jafara University confirms that while there is a strong conceptual overlap in the required psychosocial traits such as communication, resilience, ethical commitment, and collaborative problem-solving the contexts in which these traits are applied are vastly different. Scouting education acts as a vital incubator for the foundational elements of social and emotional intelligence. It provides a safe, experiential environment where youths can practice leadership, experience failure, learn conflict resolution, and internalize the ethic of service. These experiences build a robust psychological baseline. However, the transition to university leadership requires the elevation of these baseline skills into the realm of strategic, institutional management [26]. The university president must navigate a landscape defined via formal authority, legal accountability, and complex stakeholder dynamics. The informal persuasion of a scout leader must evolve into the strategic governance of an academic executive. The active intelligence required to solve a logistical problem in a scout camp is fundamentally different from the active intelligence required to balance a university budget or negotiate with a government ministry [27], [28], [29], [30]. This analysis also highlights a critical gap in the existing literature and public discourse. While it is tempting to draw a direct, romanticized line from a leader's youth in scouting to their adult success, such narratives often lack empirical rigor. The institutional documents of Al-Jafara University, while rich in describing the organizational culture and strategic goals, cannot serve as empirical evidence of the president's psychological traits or the direct impact of their scouting background [31], [32]. To claim that scouting "caused" the success of a university presidency is an epistemological overreach. The relationship is better understood as contributory and developmental, rather than strictly causal.

9. Conclusions

The psychosocial formation of leadership is a cumulative, lifelong process that does not begin at the apex of an organizational hierarchy. This study concludes that scouting education provides a highly effective non-formal environment for cultivating the foundational psychosocial resources necessary for leadership, including emotional intelligence, ethical grounding, collaborative skills, and a commitment to service. However, the transition from scouting leadership to university presidency is not an automatic transfer of skills. It is a complex process of recontextualization. The leader must adapt their foundational psychosocial resources to operate within a framework of formal authority, legal accountability, and institutional complexity. The experience of Al-Jafara University, as reflected in its institutional documents, demonstrates a strong alignment with the ethical and collaborative values championed via scouting, particularly regarding community service and participatory governance. Public documents reflect organizational discourse and cannot definitively attribute institutional success to the individual psychological traits or formative experiences of the university president.

10. Recommendations

Based on the findings and analytical limits of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for future research and practical application:

- Future studies should move beyond desk-based analysis to employ qualitative empirical methods. Conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews with university presidents who have scouting backgrounds, alongside systematic biographical analysis, would provide richer data on how formative experiences are cognitively and emotionally integrated into executive leadership styles.

- Higher education institutions and ministries should design leadership development programs for academic administrators that intentionally integrate the experiential, non-formal learning principles of scouting.
- Training should focus on active intelligence, emotional regulation, conflict management, and ethical decision-making in high-stakes environments.
- It is recommended that Al-Jafara University, or a similar institution, establish a specialized research center dedicated to the study of educational leadership and psychosocial development. This center could facilitate longitudinal studies tracking the leadership trajectories of individuals involved in non-formal education, providing robust empirical data to inform future educational policies.
- Researchers and academic writers must maintain strict epistemological boundaries, clearly distinguishing between the description of institutional goals and the scientific evaluation of individual psychological traits. Causal claims regarding leadership development must be supported via rigorous empirical evidence rather than anecdotal or documentary assumptions.

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