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Decoding Success: How the Synergy of Key Influences Drives the Professional Development of Talented Economic Leaders, and How Educational Institutions Can Maximize Their Potential

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Research Article

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Abstract

Background/purpose. This study aimed to explore the interactions among the most prominent internal and external factors (and their interplay) that influence the professional development of talented leaders in the economic field and how educational institutions can maximize their potential.

Materials/methods. Longitudinal tracking of leadership trajectories was conducted using a qualitative phenomenological approach. Data were collected through documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. The study involved economic leaders in Saudi Arabia listed in the Saudi Financial Market Authority (CMA) registry, covering 491 companies. Participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling, including 26 leaders, 10 focus group participants, and 13 gatekeepers.

Results. The findings revealed key interactions within this context. Prominent internal interactions included independence and decision-making, motivation and decision-making, and motivation and autonomy. The most significant external interactions were between family and school, family and community, family and peers, family and career opportunities or business organisations, and school and community.

Conclusion. The multidirectional interactive process between family and individual, which directly affects various abilities and personal, psychological, and social characteristics, plays a key role in stimulating internal motivation—the primary source of all subsequent achievements.

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1. Introduction

The philosophy of talent development has evolved through different stages. At first, talent was seen as a fixed, innate ability (Subotnik et al., 2011). This perspective later shifted to recognizing talent as excellence within specific fields (Subotnik et al., 2019), and eventually moved towards a more comprehensive and interactive model. Current research now views talent as a dynamic process shaped by the complex interaction of psychological, social, personal, and environmental factors, all of which contribute to outstanding achievement in particular areas (Dai & Harrison, 2007; Dean, 2004; Kiewra & Witte, 2018; Plucker & Barber, 2020). Studies show that developing talented individuals into top performers depends on intricate interactions among educational, psychological, and social influences. These interactions can be categorised as internal (e.g., motivation, independence), external (e.g., family, school, community), and cross-domain (the interaction between internal and external factors) (Al-Jughaiman, 2018; Subotnik et al., 2017; Dai, 2017). As Basca (2009) noted, these interactions are highly complex and often mainly manifest in one or two key areas (Subotnik & Jarvin, 2005). Moreover, this developmental process begins prenatally and continues throughout life, unfolding through the integrative dynamics of multiple influences (Dai & Li, 2022; Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015). Conversely, economic leaders play an essential role in guiding economic systems (Savelyev et al., 2021; Strielkowski et al., 2020). Their responsibilities have become increasingly complex due to rapid and large-scale economic changes (Al-Malki, 2023; Kaftan et al., 2023). Effective economic leadership is judged by overall performance efficiency, especially financial performance (Al-Saifi & Muqah, 2020). Although leadership roles differ across sectors, they are closely connected to economic leadership (Bhalotra et al., 2023). Some argue that a true leader can influence economic aspects and outcomes (Raagmaa, 2001). Leadership in the economic domain is recognised as one of the most vital areas of leadership and talent (Ambrose, 2021), since the economy underpins the foundation of nations (Ahmed, 2012).

Additionally, Educational institutions in this regard need to take part by adopting programs to identify talent in economic leadership early, establish practical standards for this, and offer integrated, planned programs that expand and deepen the challenge and maximize the benefits of economic leadership experiences through apprenticeship and supervision. In other words, educational institutions' roles in identifying and appropriately nurturing gifted students in various fields are a significant part of their academic and pedagogical roles (Zieglar & Baker, 2013). The school has great potential in this context (Feldhusen, 2001). It plays a key role in identifying and nurturing gifted students across various fields (Subotnik et al., 2018). Furthermore, deepening understanding of the impact of different interactions on students is extremely important (Subotnik et al., 2017). At the leadership level, school roles, while important, are highly complex and challenging (Marvin & Mary, 2006). Therefore, they require a deep understanding of their components to build on this understanding. Furthermore, Jarvin & Subotnik (2010) and Subotnik et al (2017) emphasized the urgent need to understand the various interactions in the development of gifted individuals and their impact on the individual to identify the potential and opportunities for early intervention in planned, organized, and extended ways by various parties, most notably educational institutions and the family.

Therefore, this study aims to bridge this research gap by investigating some of the most significant interactions influencing the professional development of talented leaders in the economic field by answering the following question: What are the most prominent interactions affecting the professional development of gifted leaders in the economic sector, and what are educational institutions' most prominent roles in employing them?

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2. Literature Review

A review of the theoretical literature on talent development underscores an urgent need to examine the requirements for professional growth, the factors that influence it, and how these evolve. Identifying success factors based on the experiences of accomplished leaders across various fields—particularly in leadership—is essential (Zaidan, 2022; Dai, 2017; Wigfield et al., 2007). Although many studies have explored various influencing factors and their interactions, few have explicitly focused on this context in leaders, especially within the economic sector. There is an apparent necessity to understand the evolution of professional leadership through various factors and dynamic interactions that contribute to leadership excellence and talent development over time (Zaidan, 2022; Wigfield et al., 2007). Olszewski et al. (2019) recommended that future studies adopt a broader scope in talent development for each field, while Leitch et al. (2012) called for more detailed research on leadership development. Grigore and Marinescu (2014) emphasised that economic growth, entrepreneurship, and leadership are critically important areas for scholarly investigation. Notably, the researchers found no comprehensive study—whether international or Arab—that systematically examines the diverse interactions affecting leaders in general, nor any study specifically addressing the economic domain.

3. Methodology

The researchers conducted this qualitative study using a phenomenological approach, as it enables a deep understanding of the examined phenomenon while ensuring realistic interpretation and inference (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Williams, 2021). The study involved 49 economic leaders, including 5 participants in the exploratory phase, 21 participants in the main study, 10 focus group participants, and 13 Gatekeepers. All participants were professionals working in the economic sector with extensive and diverse experience profiles, including at least 20 years of professional experience, at least 5 transitions between companies, and at least 3 leadership positions. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, drawing from a population with specific characteristics, as they represented suitable data sources for the researchers (Erin, 2019; Andrade, 2021). The researchers determined that they had reached sufficient saturation to address the study's questions after including 49 participants—an acceptable number, given that Creswell and Creswell (2018) set the acceptable range for such studies between 10 and 15 individuals. Additionally, the researchers employed snowball sampling by initially selecting participants who met the study's specified criteria, who then nominated others from their networks who likewise qualified (Parker et al., 2019).

The main participants were identified through multiple sources, including nominations by senior leaders across various fields. These nominators included 11 leaders and officials (including 3 members of the Saudi Shura Council), 3 university professors, 3 prominent merchants, and 2 leaders from the Saudi financial market. After collecting and screening the proposed names, the researchers selected those that best met their classification criteria. The exploratory group consisted of the Deputy Head of Growth Services at Bank Albilad, the Development Director at the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, an Associate Professor of Accounting at King Saud University, the Senior Vice President of Financial Affairs at Marafiq Company, and a business entrepreneur. The interview questionnaire comprised 10 main questions. The study was conducted collaboratively with participants, and researchers conducted interviews lasting 90 to 180 minutes each. Interviews were held with 4 group members via Zoom and 1 in person. The study's primary participants included 21 key executives and leaders from various sectors of the Saudi economy: the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Ma'aden, the Chief Executive Officer of United Maintenance & Trading Company, the Executive Vice President for Supply Chain at Arabian Pipes Company, the Chief Executive Officer of Ayan Development Company, the Change Management Director at Saline Water Conversion Corporation, the Technical Sector Budget Officer at the Ministry of Finance, the CEO of

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Namaa Company, the Vice Chairman of SABIC, the Chief Executive Officer of National Gypsum Company (GIPCO), the Chief Executive Officer of Al-Qimah Plastic Products Company, the Chief Executive Officer of CLA Company, a Member of the Shura Council and Vice Chairman of the Saudi Chambers Council, the Executive Director at Dickson Global Company, the CEO of Anabib Company, the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development at Anabib Company, a Board Member of The National Company, the CEO of Fursa Company and Head of Fund Services, Custody & Securities at Bank Albilad, the Internal Audit Director at Al Rajhi Bank, the Head of Accounts Department at the Food and Drug Authority, the Chairman of the Commerce Committee at Al-Ahsa Chamber and former Vice Chairman of the Chamber, the International Brokerage Officer at Saudi Hollandi Bank, the Planning and Development Officer at Pharmaceuticals Company, the Investment Fund Member, the Vice President of Commercial Affairs at Sipchem (Saudi International Petrochemical Company), the Director of International Cooperation at the Space Agency, and former businessmen.

The focus groups comprised ten (10) leaders selected through purposive sampling. The first group included the Business Planning Manager at SABIC, a Consultant at Saudi Aramco, and three businessmen with over 30 years of commercial experience. The second group comprised the Investment Manager at a Riyad Bank branch, the Head of Premium Banking at a Riyad Bank branch, and three businesswomen with over 20 years of extensive commercial experience. Regarding the gatekeepers (as defined by Subotnik, 2019)—individuals whose capabilities and expertise enable them to determine others' success and who play a vital role in supporting research (McFadyen & Rankin, 2016)—this group consisted of 13 distinguished individuals. These leaders have held senior global positions, each possessing 30-40 years of experience and having occupied 7-10 major leadership roles. The gatekeepers included the Chairman of the Board at Arab Bank Financial Services, the Head of Government Accounts at Bank Albilad, the CEO of a steel manufacturing company, the President of Saudi Aramco, the CEO of a mining corporation, the Founding Chair of the Women's Employment Committee at the Saudi Chambers Federation, the Vice Chairman of the Capital Market Authority and the Saudi Organization for Certified Public Accountants (SOCPA), a Member of the Financial Committee for the Shura Council, the Chairperson of the National Committee for Financial and Insurance Sectors, the Chair of the Regulatory and Supervisory Policies Committee at the Saudi Financial Market, an Associate Professor of Management at King Faisal University, the Head of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Unit at King Saud University Business School, and the President of the Royal Academy of Management and Research Advisor at the Royal Court Diwan, Oman.

Study Implementation

Participant Selection Criteria

To ensure participant consistency and alignment with the study's objectives, the researchers established a set of criteria to identify talented leaders in the economic sector. These criteria were developed based on a review of relevant literature and consisted of eight indicators, fulfilling at least one criterion sufficient for inclusion. The requirements included: demonstrated administrative and leadership success in managing an organisation, classification of the leader's organisation as high-performing or recognised by accredited local or international bodies, clear and measurable organisational impact on society, evident influence of the leader or their organisation at the administrative or productive level, the leader's status as a socially influential figure, possession of specialized knowledge, the ability to drive positive change, and the contribution of innovative ideas with organisational impact. These criteria were presented to a panel of seven experts for validation. After adjustments based on their feedback, the criteria were applied by reviewing each candidate's name and assessing their fulfillment of one or more criteria through documented evidence.

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Development of the Main Study Questions

The researchers created a series of open-ended questions that generated numerous sub-questions. During a seminar, these questions were presented to a group of 13 specialists in talent, intellectual excellence, and special education. After making revisions based on the seminar discussions, the updated questions were reviewed by eight evaluators with expertise in these fields. Further adjustments to specific phrases resulted in 10 main questions. Examples include: In talent development, various interactions emerge among multiple elements. How would you describe the different interactions related to your internal personality factors? Various influential interactions occur among external environmental factors. How would you describe the diverse interactions among external factors such as family, community, school, and friends?

Development of Questions for (Gatekeepers)

Following the analysis of the qualitative study results, a set of questions was developed for the Gatekeepers. These questions were presented to a group of 13 individuals at a seminar, and later to 5 evaluators. The questions focused on their assessment and agreement with the analysis of participants' responses, which were thoroughly examined to develop themes and codes before being presented to the Gatekeepers. The most prominent questions directed at the (Gatekeepers)were. Among the most significant interactions between family and community were those related to the influence of the family's name, its economic and leadership legacy on society, and individual opportunities and success factors. How do you view these interactions and their impacts? Several influential interactions appeared between family and school, characterised by complementary educational roles and diverse instructional responsibilities. How do you evaluate these responses?

Research Instruments

Semi-structured Interviews

After scheduling the interviews, all study participants received a copy of the university's research ethics committee approval, a summary and introduction to the study, and the main questions to be addressed during the interview. The format and timing of the interviews were then arranged. The interviews were conducted and recorded using Voice Recorder Pro and Zoom's recording feature, and the data were transcribed into written text with Turbo Scribe Transcription. Each interview with selected participants lasted between 90 and 220 minutes, with some conducted over multiple sessions.

Focus Groups

The focus group sessions followed the same approach as the individual interviews, with the main difference that they were held collectively, with questions posed for discussion among members. The first focus group was conducted in person, lasting one and a half hours, during which numerous questions were raised and participants were encouraged to share ideas. Key questions centred on how focus group members viewed the interactions between an individual's capabilities and their environment, how the dynamic between internal and external factors might influence professional development, and how they assessed the positive and negative effects of these interactions. The second focus group was conducted remotely via Zoom, lasting 1 hour, using the same method and questions as the first.

Document Analysis

Documents selected for analysis were obtained through evidence provided by the individuals themselves (certificates, photographs, assignments, etc.), via platforms specialising in profiling individuals such as https://manhom.com/, and through recorded videos and personal interviews. The researchers examined a collection of documents supporting the study's findings, including video

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recordings, résumés, publicly available online data, photographs, and speeches. These covered all materials that could assist the researcher in gathering information (Robson, 2004; Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2014).

Data Analysis

The researchers employed the thematic analysis methodology developed by Braun and Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Braun et al., 2016; Clarke et al., 2019), which involves six key phases. It begins with thorough data familiarisation through transcription, repeated in-depth reading, and continuous note-taking. This is followed by the systematic initiation of analysis by generating initial codes. Developing overarching themes that group codes into unified clusters, reviewing potential themes by re-reading codes and data to verify extraction accuracy, identifying central themes and sub-themes, and constructing comprehensive thematic tables, culminating in writing the report to present well-founded answers to the study's research questions while establishing connections between themes. The analysis was performed manually and independently to identify preliminary themes and codes. The MAXQDA software was used for grouping and retrieval features, with researcher-controlled coding maintained throughout the process.

Ensuring Qualitative Data Quality

To assess data quality, the researchers applied the four main criteria for qualitative research quality proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. To strengthen credibility, they employed triangulation across multiple approaches: involving three observers, creating multiple codes, diversifying data sources (participants, two focus groups, Gatekeepers, and a qualitative sample), and using different data collection methods (semi-structured interviews and various documents). These approaches align with credibility enhancement techniques endorsed by Creswell and Creswell (2018), Grossoehme (2014), Lawrence (2015), and Yin (2009). Dependability was established through several steps: involving an external auditor to review the findings, increasing the interview sample size, analysing different documents, and documenting all phases and procedures thoroughly. The researchers also compared their findings with previous studies, following the advice of Given (2008), Koch et al. (2014), and Polit and Beck (2012). To enhance transferability, they provided a comprehensive context for the study's implementation and participant characteristics, drawing on frameworks from Anderson and Arsenault & Anderson (2005), Carminati (2018), Jackson et al. (2015), and Klingberg et al. (2024). Confirmability was secured through peer review, extended periods of data collection and analysis, and multiple reflective reviews, as recommended by Ahmed (2024), Diane (2014), Polit and Beck (2012), and Tobin and Begley (2004).

Data Saturation and Coding Reliability

Data saturation was achieved through an iterative process involving concurrent data collection and repeated reflection. A priori criteria were established, including ensuring the new data did not add new information. The researchers triangulated the data and used Maxqda to develop a coding scheme while also focusing on sample diversity. This achieved saturation through four methods: theoretical saturation, data saturation, code saturation, and theme saturation. The process began with interviewing five participants to validate the prepared questions, which led to the identification of initial themes. Subsequently, the questions were revised, and we conducted interviews with seven additional key participants and two focus groups, each comprising ten people. This allowed us to clarify some aspects while identifying others that needed further research. This led to additional interviews with six participants until thematic stability was achieved. To ensure inter-researcher reliability, the researchers conducted initial analysis, merged the themes, and reorganized them through five rounds of discussion, ensuring consistency with the overall findings. This process led to consensus on the final distribution of the axes.

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Answer to the Research Question

What are the most prominent interactions influencing the professional development of talented leaders in the economic field?

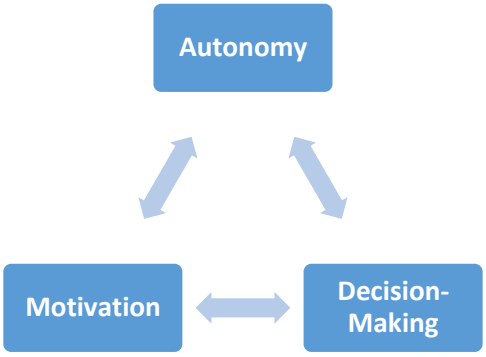
The Nature of Interactions

All developmental theories and other theoretical models, such as ecological theories, emphasise the influence of interactions between various factors. They establish that the advancement of talented individuals into specialized fields directly results from these complex interactions involving educational, psychological, and social components. These interactions can be internal, external, or a combination of both. Among these studies and theories are Al-Jughaiman (2018), Sternberg (1998), Dai (2017), and Subotnik et al. (2017).

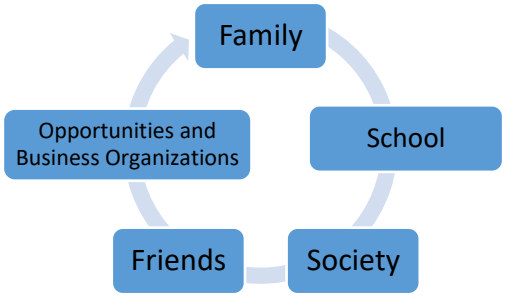
Key Interactions

The interactions identified by analyzing participants' responses reflected intersections, overlaps, and mutual influences among various factors. Notably, some interactions were clearer than others, while some appeared more impactful. The researchers identified these interactions based on participants' direct statements about different types of interactions and influences and through indirect inference of impact by understanding the context. Occasionally, follow-up questions were asked directly to verify these interactions. The manifestations of these interactions included correlations between factors and reciprocal influences. The most prominent interactions involved thirteen distinct types sufficiently evident to the researchers. Additionally, evidence of other potential interactions was found, although these were not considered conclusive findings due to incomplete understanding. Figure (1-2) illustrates the key interactions identified, as follows:

Key *Internal* Factor Interactions



Key *External* Factor Interactions



Key *Internal-External* Factor Interactions

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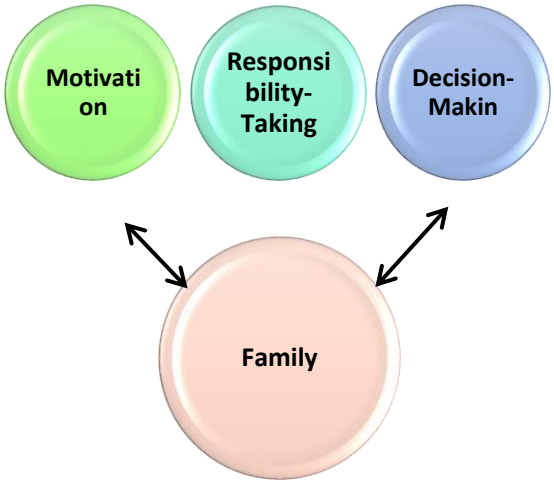

Figure 1. Key Interactions among Various Factors

Types of Interactions

First: Interactions among Internal Factors

Interaction between Independence and Decision-Making

Independence symbolized fertile ground for decision-making and was a key element in analysing the information on which decisions were based. Participant (M9) stated: "My independent way of thinking clearly influenced my personality. Being independent helped me make decisions based on personal and logical analysis." Similarly, (M15) noted: "I can say my decisions in this passion were very bold and independent." Although nearly all participants exhibited this type of interaction, males and females differed in the extent of their interaction. Participant (M5) mentioned: "No matter how much independence I have, I feel that female leaders tend to follow a more cautious path."

The Interaction between Motivation and Decision-Making

The analysis of participants' responses revealed a strong link between motivation and decision-making. This appeared in various forms: motivation acted as a driving force, with achievement-oriented motives connected to specific decisions. High motivation led to success and influenced decision-making. Motivation affected both the type of decision and its level of risk or challenge, and was associated with a sense of responsibility towards others, turning these drivers into tangible choices and actions. As participant (M6) stated: "When your motivation strongly influences your decision-making, you make decisions that look to the long term and embrace challenges - meaning not just limited to your current timeframe. If your motivation were slightly lacking, you might not make such decisions." Participant (M16) added: "Your motivation in decision-making leads you to make strong, future-oriented decisions with high risks." The findings demonstrated that this interaction was more evident among males and had a greater impact than among females, with motivation itself being higher in males, aligning with their decision-making patterns.

Interaction between Motivation and Independence

The findings showed that higher motivation correlated with greater independence, and vice versa. The combination of motivation and independence lessened reliance on external validation. Participant (M12) stated: "I do not like conforming to societal norms—differentiation is key." Participant (M19) noted: "Without motivation and independence, you will not achieve big ideas. Enthusiasm alone is not enough without independence." Participant (M9) shared: "I decided to pursue a master's degree, and as soon as I started working independently during my studies in the UK, my leadership traits became clearly visible."

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II. Interactions of External Factors

Family-School Interaction

Participants showed significant variation in their perceptions of this interaction, ranging from positive to negative or even non-existent. Key aspects included shared educational goals, reciprocal educational relationships, guidance roles, character-building functions, and psychosocial support. Participant (M10) noted: "School was not just academic - it was educational in the broader sense, with character education preceding formal instruction." Participant (M9) added: "My family provided good educational conditions, though not ideal." However, some participants viewed this interaction as weak, negative, or fluctuating. Participant (M25) stated: "School played both positive and negative roles," while (M8) claimed: "There wasn't much connection," and (M7) asserted: "There was absolutely no impact." Gender and geographic differences were evident, with female participant (SP4) observing: "Any different idea from a woman faced opposition from both school and home," and (M5) recalling: "I wasn't allowed to think, question, or criticize."

Family-Community Interaction

This interaction revealed varied patterns among participants. Family social status, size, geographic location, and surrounding culture all played significant roles. Participant (M9) described positive effects: "It greatly contributed to personality development and social skills," while (M19) noted implicit pressures: "Your family name carries expectations - you must succeed as a leader." Participant (M18) highlighted community recognition: "People knew our family and treated us with respect." Conversely, some reported negative impacts. Participant (M23) stated: "Both school and community opposed women's freedom of thought," and (M11) mentioned nepotism: "Family names carried weight in our city." Socioeconomic status and family culture significantly shaped this interaction, as (SP10) observed: "The external environment greatly affected our family's intellectual openness," and (M7) noted: "Social gatherings in our area shaped personality development."

Family-Friends Interaction

This moderately significant interaction manifested across several dimensions: family oversight in friend selection, friends serving as information channels between school and home, and dedicated social spaces that enhance peer leadership. Participant (M10) emphasised: "My father carefully selected my friends," while (M15) described deep family-friend integration: "My exceptional high school friend regularly interacted with my extended family and provided them positive feedback about me." The interaction proved stronger in open-minded families and varied geographically, as (M19) noted parental restrictions: "They prohibited certain friendships," and (M14) observed cultural shifts: "Moving to Jeddah changed everything socially."

Family-Opportunity/Business Organization Interaction

This significant interaction arose through various channels: family, financial, and social capital, early commercial exposure, and leadership opportunities. Participant (M25) stated: "Family support in securing opportunities proved crucial," while (M19) described motivational cultural reinforcement: "Constant family questions like 'When will you start your company?' fueled greater initiative." The interaction mainly affected personal rather than psychological traits, as (SP11) observed: "Business organisations influenced personal traits more than psychological ones," and (SP4) emphasised class confidence: "Being born into certain families gave us self-assurance."

School-Community Interaction

Analysis revealed moderate-impact interactions, including school-mediated social integration and community-influenced educational environments. Participant (M1) observed: "Undoubtedly, society affects students," while (M15) described confidence-building activities: "Elementary school

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broadcasts helped overcome shyness." However, some denied this connection, with (M23) stating: "No openness existed beyond school walls," and (M8) claiming: "There was no linkage." Notably, older participants reported stronger historical school-community ties than younger ones. Participant (SP7) recalled: "Early schools treated us as adults," while (M10) contrasted past and present: "Education used to prioritise character development." Gender differences appeared stark, with (M23) asserting: "Schools and communities opposed women's intellectual freedom - no openness existed."

Third: Interactions between Internal and External Factors

The Interaction between Family and Decision-Making

Many participants viewed the family as a supportive element in individual decision-making, whether through direct encouragement, providing a suitable environment, or boosting confidence. Decision-making sometimes involved considering family interests. Participant (M2) stated: "It had a tremendous impact, especially in giving me confidence in making decisions," while (M9) explained: "The biggest influence from my family was the moral and financial support in my choices." The interaction between family and decision-making also appeared through complementary relationships, particularly between spouses. Participant (M26) said: "My husband... shared many decisions with me, and vice versa—he listened to my opinion," and (M23) added: "I always sought advice from my father and husband before making decisions." Paradoxically, in some families with simple, non-economic, or non-leadership backgrounds, there was greater support and interaction regarding decision-making for males only—rooted in traditional notions of masculinity—while the opposite was true for females. This makes the concept of interactions more complex, as they are shaped by intersecting and interacting factors.

The Interaction between Family and Responsibility

The family played a crucial role in fostering a sense of responsibility in individuals, with early practices clearly influencing this process. These included planning for responsibilities from a young age, such as early involvement in business, assigning various tasks, delegating certain authorities and decisions, and managing financial responsibilities. Participant (M17) emphasised: "Honestly, I believe my parents played a huge role in this... They instilled values in me from a young age—that hard work and responsibility are the keys to success." Participant (M5) remarked: "I strongly believe it goes back to the foundations... If the family is not supportive or lacks these foundations, you might miss out on certain traits." (The response included vocal emphasis and physical gestures.) The effect of this interaction showed distinct gender-based differences, with males receiving and responding to responsibility-related interactions more prominently than females. The analysis also revealed that the nature of this interaction depended on the family's openness and culture. Participant (SP12) said: "The family size is what shapes this," while (SP9) added: "You have a big responsibility to uphold the family name."

The Interaction between Family and Motivation

The family played a crucial role in boosting motivation among many participants, demonstrated through ongoing encouragement, pushing for progress and experimentation, and providing a stable family environment. The influence of parental role models was particularly evident. The link between family and motivation was often marked by informal guidance, usually the father's, with other family members playing secondary roles. It was also shaped by role models and their direct or indirect influence. Participant (M15) shared: "I was greatly influenced by my late father—his work ethic and how he dealt with officials made me aspire to be a leader like him." Participant (M22) added: "The family itself had a driven mindset—everyone was motivated to achieve, and that was instilled in me." Conversely, some participants viewed their families as supportive only of safe, conservative choices.

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Participant (M25) noted: "The family is crucial as a source of security, but sometimes it keeps you in a comfort zone when you need to think outside the box." Participant (M16) added: "Families provide protection and security, but excessive protection can be a shock in the real world." It also appeared that families with economic or leadership backgrounds had a stronger motivational impact, as simply feeling connected to such a family gave individuals the drive to succeed. Participant (SP12) affirmed this by saying: "As they say, it's about the family's composition—if you have motivated people around you, you become like them."

4. Result and Discussion

First: Interactions between Internal Factors

Interaction between independence and Decision-Making

The overall framework of all talent development theories and models includes this kind of interaction (Al-Jughaiman, 2018; Dai, 2017; Subotnik et al., 2017). Subotnik et al. (2019) highlighted general abilities, social skills, and psychological skills, along with their interactions. Kumar et al. (2023) discovered an interactive relationship between independence and financial decisions specifically, as well as overall well-being. Subotnik et al. (2019) pointed to personal factors or internal principles in general, their interactions, and their influence on decision-making. The understanding of this type of interaction comes from the developmental theoretical perspective, which claims that interactions are dynamic, with each element affecting the other in different contexts. These components collectively fall within the framework of the characteristics and traits that differentiate talented individuals, as supported by numerous studies (Dai, 2017; Subotnik et al., 2017; Subotnik et al., 2019). The variation in the level of this interaction between males and females—being stronger in females—may be linked to the fact that females often make decisions in collaboration with spouses and family members, especially parents. Furthermore, societal pressure on females is higher than on males, which can limit their decisions and independence, as confirmed by Coenjaerts et al. (2021).

Interaction between Motivation and Decision-Making

Numerous studies highlight the interactions between cognitive abilities, psychological traits, and personal characteristics (Dai, 2017; Subotnik et al., 2017; Subotnik et al., 2019). Various motivational theories assert that internal drives and incentives form the foundation of individual behaviour (Kanfer, 1990). Maslow (1943) played a significant role in identifying individual needs that generate motivation for growth, leading to corresponding decisions. Gagné & Hewett (2024) findings confirmed the effects of this interaction between motivation and decision-making. George & Dane (2016) discovered that internal motives and emotions are among the most important drivers in decision-making. Although the relationship between motivation and decision-making may appear straightforward as a cause-and-effect link, deeper analysis reveals its complexity due to the numerous factors influencing it. Concerning gender differences, genetic and environmental influences—particularly those related to family and society—have a more direct impact on the internal factors of females compared to males (Coenjaerts et al., 2021). This influence can even suppress female motivation within contexts that indirectly determine ambition levels and subsequent decisions.

Interaction between Motivation and Independence

The results of Chirkov (2003) confirmed the link between independence, motivation, and well-being, noting that this did not vary across the four cultures studied. Madiun (2023) highlighted the interactive effect between individual achievement motivation and educational independence. Kirkwood (2009) found that although general motives are similar between genders, the desire for independence has a greater influence on women. Participants exhibited a combination of increasing internal motivation and independent thinking, learning, and opinion-forming, which, together with

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this motivation, creates a significant developmental pathway for the individual. Certainly, the different traits of talented individuals play a key role in this interaction. Many studies on the characteristics of talented individuals indicate that a large number of them possess high motivation and independence, forming a supportive combination for talent development (Al-Jughaiman, 2018; Walberg & Paik, 2005).

Second: Interactions between External Factors

The Interaction between Family and School

All developmental and ecological theories and models agree on the existence of this interaction between family and school. Subotnik et al. (2019) examined the complex relationship between school and family and their reciprocal roles, while Dai et al. (2017) highlighted the broader cultural role associated with family and school and its influence on individual motivation and development. Al-Jughaiman (2018) regarded family and educational factors as key pillars of his model. Ziegler (2005) described the family as a "fundamental and influential context." The evidence supporting this interactive influence is well established. However, family disintegration, negative relationships, paternal absence, or certain types of deviance within some families may diminish interaction effects or even turn them into negative interactions, leading to psychological and behavioural issues (Santrock, 2019; Farrell & Gray, 2018). From a less optimistic perspective, Kiewra & Witte (2018) found that schools played a limited role in this process. Kelty & Wakanyashi (2020) observed that despite clear evidence of families' role in supporting educational achievement, practical realities reveal deficiencies in the interactive roles of family and school, with factors such as social and cultural status exerting significant influence.

Regarding gender differences in interactions, this is primarily attributed to various reasons, chiefly the dominant socioreligious culture of the period, which was connected to the type of school and family upbringing that constrained female roles (Miller & Ubeda, 2012; Ellingsen et al., 2013), reflected in curricula, activities, and participation. The disparity in interactions between those living and studying in large cities versus others served as a key indicator of the influence of social and geographical contexts, as competition between schools often diminished. Nonetheless, it should be emphasised that there is no single measure for the extent and level of influence of the interaction between school and family, as this depends on numerous interconnected factors related to the environment of both institutions, culture, personal and psychological attributes, individual abilities, and more.

The Interaction between Family and Community

The existence of this type of interaction has been emphasised in all developmental systems theories and their models, including the "TDMM" theory, which highlights interactions between different environmental elements and their effects on individuals (Subotnik et al., 2017), the theory of evolving complexity (Dai, 2017), and its perspective on the integration of environmental and social elements, as well as Al-Jughaiman's (2018) model, which focused on the significant impact of the surrounding environment in terms of the type and extent of support provided to talented individuals. Tannenbaum (2003) identified environmental factors as a main pillar of interaction. Many studies in this context have confirmed the interactions between family, community, and external environment (Dai, 2017; Subotnik et al., 2017; Subotnik et al., 2019). Abdulhafiz (2020) concluded that several factors contributed to this role, most notably personal factors, family, environment, and community. Wafi (2019) found that this interaction plays a significant role in shaping character and preparing individuals for practical life. It is essential to understand that the interaction between family and the external environment is influenced by the culture and orientations of the community itself, where religious and cultural values intersect between family and community. While the family supports positive community interaction, learning, and experience within the family contribute to

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understanding and engaging with the external community. The family's socioeconomic level and its impact on the type and level of interaction results from the nature of societies based on large, extended families, where generations inherit a sense of respect and appreciation for such families, reflecting in all levels. It also appears that such families are capable of providing support, creating job opportunities, and offering financial assistance to lower-level family members, which partially explains this status among many of them.

The Interaction between Family and Friends

The interaction between family and friends is understood as how family relationships influence connections with friends, and vice versa, through how friends influence the family, and the cumulative effects of these influences on the individual. Developmental and ecological theories affirm the existence of a reciprocal relationship in the individual, achieved through a set of elements, including family and friends, and that the nature of these interactions, which create various effects, is complex but real. This was confirmed in the "TDMM" model, which views talent as an integrated system including the individual and their environment (Subotnik & Jarvin, 2010). Ziegler (2009) emphasised that the main elements in talented development relate to the environment in its various forms and details, education in its entirety, and the interactions between these components. Al-Jughaiman (2018) included school and environment and their interactions affecting the individual as central pillars of his model. Mönks et al. (1986) was the first to independently address peers, making them a fundamental element in his model intersecting with several factors, including family, and linking their interactive roles to positive and negative effects (Heller et al., 2000; Boxtel, & Mönks (1992), Subotnik et al., (2003) noted that the interaction between friends and family is a real influence on talented individuals, which may take positive or negative forms. Rözer et al. (2015) confirmed that there are collaborative influences between family members and friends on the individual. Rubin (2016) found that relationships with friends provided significant social support, reflecting on mental health and individual well-being. Moorman & Pai (2023) concluded that family support benefited students at all academic levels, except graduate studies. It is established that an individual's mental and social health stems from positive interactions with family and friends, in which they play complementary roles in building personality (Berk, 2014; Santrock, 2019). Regarding the observed effect of family openness and culture on geographical region or multinational origins, this is expected, as culture is a key element in various interactions. When a family adopts a culture accepted by the surrounding community, this significantly influences interactions.

The Interaction between Family, Opportunities, and Business Organisations

This interaction is bidirectional, manifesting through family influences that support professional growth and through business organisations that provide unique cultural environments that meet family needs and commitments (Frone, 2003). However, this interaction can turn negative through conflicts between family and business interests and related practices, or business problems affecting the individual within the family or vice versa (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). The relationship between opportunities and family can be explained by family systems theories, which generally see the individual as part of a complex system. These theories rely on several key assumptions, notably the interconnectedness of family parts, the idea that the family cannot be fully understood by its parts alone but through their interactions, and that individual behaviour is shaped within the family, influenced by its structure and organisation. All these interactions within and outside the family influence individual behaviour (Daly, 2004). Miroshnychenko et al. (2022) confirmed that family business habits lay a foundation for children's success in organisations, especially family businesses, and that these families invested in their children, creating a form of economic extension and extended control. The family's influence in supporting children through adopting supportive cultures and various interactive methods has been verified (Ward, 2011). This aligns with Combs et al. (2019),

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whose results confirmed the impact of economically extended families on their children's opportunities and commercial growth. Morelock and Feldman (2003) observed that talented and gifted children were born into families that recognised and fostered this. Conversely, Zhang et al. (2020) clarified that this relationship between family and business organisations, and the resulting work motivation aligned with family economic extension, is actually a double-edged sword. While it is expected to be supportive and motivating, it can also be exhausting and burdensome for the individual in impactful ways. The findings of this study differ from those of Bee (2014), who reported instances where economically extended families negatively influenced individuals, their opportunities, and their relationships with organisations, due to sibling rivalry and feelings of family authoritarianism, as well as disruptive or withdrawn behaviours. Lee et al (2006) concluded that the likelihood of negative influence through the family-organisation relationship is greater for women than for men.

The Interaction between School and Community

This type of interaction has been broadly highlighted in developmental and ecological theories. Bloom (1985) emphasised the reciprocal influences between family, school, and the surrounding community in developing talents among the gifted. Bronfenbrenner (2005) demonstrated interactions within what he termed "ecological systems" in the environment, including family and broader community structures, such as community culture and orientations. Bronfenbrenner (2005) showed that various social and environmental contexts interact through a set of elements. Subotnik et al. (2019) explained that this process is a series of intersecting repercussions—what occurs in school impacts the individual, what happens in the community also affects the individual, and their actions intersect based on these influences. It is important to highlight that the interaction between school and community produced different results among participants, due to several reasons related to individual psychological and personal frameworks that enable adaptation and coexistence with their environment, as well as the mental capacity to perceive this interaction or not. This is also subject to several variables related to school type, culture, social environment, teaching and administrative levels, and the community's nature, culture, and location. Therefore, it is unsurprising that some participants identified specific interactions while others did not perceive them clearly or even denied their existence. Regarding differences in interaction effects based on participant age, it was found that those who experienced the beginning of their education and early schooling observed a strong interaction between school and community, driven by multiple factors, most notably the high regard for teachers and schools during their early years, which was reflected in various community interactions.

Third: Interactions between Internal and External Factors

The Interaction between Family and Decision-Making

Developmental and ecological theories unanimously acknowledge the significant interaction between family and various personal characteristics and cognitive abilities of individuals. Zeglar et al (2019) emphasised that the family serves as a context for participation by the developing individual, with bidirectional influence, where parental responses and actions greatly affect the individual's characteristics. Kiewra (2014) noted that parents substantially contribute to building various personal characteristics and beliefs of the individual. Bloom's (1958) theory highlighted the mutual influence between family and the characteristics of talented individuals that support their emergence in specific talents. Zeglar et al (2012) considered the environment with its various components, where the family forms one of its most prominent elements, and the interactions between them and the individual significantly impact their personal, psychological, and mental characteristics. Dai (2017), in his theory, emphasised that what shapes and develops the individual is the sum of interactions through their abilities, characteristics, and various social and cultural contexts, with the family being

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one of its most prominent components. Al-Jughaiman (2018) considered the interactions between family and mental skills, innate readiness, and personal and social skills as one of the most significant components of creative behaviour. The decision-making process among participants involved multiple stages, beginning early with simplified opportunities and progressing through various developmental phases into professional roles, responsibilities, and a suitable family environment. Some families contributed financially to support decisions, particularly in families with economic or leadership extensions—the results of this study aligned with several other studies. Abduljalil and Al-Zahrani (2012) confirmed a positive correlation between family stability and the level of spousal participation in decision-making and a positive relationship between family socioeconomic factors and the level of a wife's participation in decision-making. Ozcan (2017) found that their families' guidance significantly influenced professional decisions made by talented individuals. Hepert (2024) concluded that parents influence decision-making and responsibility-taking among highly talented individuals.

The Interaction between Family and Responsibility

This perspective stems from the same framework that examines the relationship between family, personal, and psychological traits, including Bronfenbrenner's (2005) focus on the intersection of familial and personal contextual interactions, and Zeglar & Stoeger's (2019) emphasis on the interactive relationship between family and an individual's personal, psychological, and social attributes. Naturally, this interaction between family and responsibility reflects specific familial roles involved in upbringing, and thus varies significantly depending on various factors, most notably those related to the family's overall characteristics and influential members. These, in turn, are shaped by the family's capabilities, culture, socioeconomic status, and other elements. Meanwhile, with all its traits, characteristics, and potential for influence, the individual's personality accounts for the variability in this interaction. This diverse range of factors significantly impacts gender-based differences in assuming responsibility. The differences are particularly pronounced among open families compared to others, among commercially or leadership-extended families compared to others, and even across different regional cultures—if the term is appropriate—as differences appeared more frequently among participants from Jeddah or Riyadh than from inland regions of the Kingdom. In this context, Masiran et al. (2023) highlighted the significant role of parental upbringing, including child empowerment and delegation, through assigning age-appropriate roles. Cline and Fay (2020) argued that exposing children to responsibilities with calculated risks enhances their internal capacities and fosters a sense of capability to act accordingly. Ludfiana (2023) demonstrated that instilling responsibility correlates with self-confidence, supporting individual personality development.

The Relationship between Family and Motivation

Participants' responses indicated that the interaction between family and motivation is significant and influential. The study's results aligned with various developmental and ecological theories. Bronfenbrenner (2005) and Zeglar (2019) confirmed different types of interactions within this context, while Kiewra (2014) highlighted parents' vital role in developing their children's traits, including those related to motivation. Here, the discussion reiterates how varying levels of influence in this interaction depend on factors related to the family, the individual, and the environment, which acts as the natural vessel for interaction, leading to different outcomes among individuals. The results of this study align with those of Griban et al. (2023), who found that family patterns significantly influence children's motivation. Eccles (2007) observed the substantial impact of family upbringing and the development of individual motivation on achievement. Vauras (2001) identified a dynamic family interaction that supports individuals in reaching accomplishments. Djazilan and Darmawan (2022) confirmed that family support in general, and early motivation development towards

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entrepreneurship, play a crucial role in creating future entrepreneurs. In this context, it can be noted that the multidirectional interactive process between the family and the individual, which directly affects various abilities and personal, psychological, and social characteristics, plays a key role in stimulating internal motivation—the primary source of all subsequent achievements. These achievements sometimes yield reciprocal benefits for the family and society. It has been confirmed that families of talented individuals are vital in nurturing and motivating their drive for success across various stages (Neihart et al., 2021).

5. Conclusion

The literature indicates a need to examine the requirements for professional growth, the factors that influence it, and how these factors evolve. Identifying success factors based on the experiences of accomplished leaders across various fields—particularly in leadership—is essential. Accordingly, the researchers conducted this qualitative study using a phenomenological approach, enabling a deep understanding of the examined phenomenon while ensuring realistic interpretation and inference. The study involved 49 economic leaders, including 5 participants in the exploratory phase, 21 participants in the main study, 10 focus group participants, and 13 Gatekeepers. The findings revealed key interactions within this context. Prominent internal interactions included independence and decision-making, motivation and decision-making, and motivation and autonomy. The most significant external interactions were between family and school, family and community, family and peers, family and career opportunities or business organisations, and school and community. This study is necessary because it adds to the limited literature on talented leaders globally, particularly in Saudi Arabia. It offers valuable recommendations and strategies for improving leadership styles and leveraging their strengths. The study's findings provide insight into and a visualization of complex interactions shaped by diverse influences. This helps identify the most prominent of these interactions, their diverse impacts, and their most influential temporal context. This supports the formulation of educational policies and the development of school programs aimed at building future economic leaders, focusing on the most influential factors. This, in turn, enables educational institutions to plan early for future economic leaders, influenced by various interconnected and diverse factors distinct from the social and cultural context, and by the capabilities of individuals and the levels of influence of their internal and external interactions. This, in turn, significantly reduces the time spent preparing economic leaders and provides practical, scientific models for these roles that account for various variables.

6. Suggestion

Like other studies, this one is not free of limitations. For example, it is limited to the Saudi Arabian context, which means its findings cannot be generalized. Furthermore, statistical analysis, such as regression, is restricted in this research, which focuses more on the qualitative side and recommends future research for deeper quantitative Analysis. Future studies may focus on social and psychological factors influencing the professional development of talented leaders in the economic field, or on the time course of talent development among these leaders.

Declarations

Ethical Considerations in the Study. To meet all essential ethical requirements, the researcher must follow these steps. They must obtain confirmation from the King Fahd National Library regarding the novelty of the topic and ensure it has not been previously researched, under No. 37087 dated 26/1/1445 AH (Appendix No. 5). They must also secure approval from the Research Ethics Committee to conduct the study under No. KFU-REC-2024-AUG-ETHICS2457 dated 12/8/2024 (Appendix No. 6). Additionally, they should obtain explicit consent from all participants for the use of their data in the scientific study. They must conceal any indication linking participants to statements made in the

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study. The researcher relied on uncontrolled random sequencing when quoting phrases and assigning participants to maintain anonymity. All directly identifiable references to participants should be removed, except in very specific cases where explicit consent has been obtained from the participant. Finally, they need to securely store all participant data and prevent unauthorized access.

Proofreading Declaration. Grammarly (subscribed, non-AI version) was used solely for grammar and proofreading. No AI-generated content was involved in preparing this manuscript.

The Authors' Contributions. This study was a collaborative effort among the following contributors: Abdulilah Al-Draiweesh led the conceptualisation of the research framework and supervised the overall study design. Abdullah Al-Jughaiman contributed significantly to developing the methodology, data collection, and analysis procedures. Abdulrahman Al-Sayed focused on interpreting the results, drafting the manuscript, and integrating both theoretical and practical implications. All authors reviewed, refined, and approved the final version of the manuscript, ensuring accuracy, coherence, and alignment with the research objectives.

Data Availability Statement. Upon a reasonable request, the supporting data of this study can be provided by the corresponding author.

Competing Interests. The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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