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Exploring the Role of Entrepreneurial Leadership in Decent Work and Economic Growth: A Sustainable Development of Textile Industry of Pakistan

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Abstract: The following research paper aims to examine the role of entrepreneurial leadership in sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 8, focusing on decent work and economic growth. The study has been conducted in the context of the textile industry of Pakistan. The findings showed a literature gap in the area of entrepreneurial leadership and SDG8. In recent years, the demand for entrepreneurial leadership has increased because such leaders demonstrate risk-taking, empathetic, strategic and visionary behaviors. All these traits are potentially beneficial for attaining sustainable goals, particularly decent work for labors and economic growth. To know the impact, interviews were conducted with 15 senior leaders of some textile companies. The study used a thematic qualitative analysis technique and interpreted interviews using codes and themes, and secondary data was also used. The findings were aligned that entrepreneurial leaders play a crucial role; however, a lot of effort is required so that true outcomes can be attained. Therefore, some recommendations are suggested in this research which will be helpful for textile companies and their leaders towards building decent workplaces and ensuring economic growth.

Introduction and Background

Currently, there have been rapid advancements at global levels where economies, technologies, and products have extensively been optimized and developed at a faster pace. Thus, these swiftly transforming and developing economies demand industrial sector (i.e., businesses) be up-to-date and develop accordingly in order to deal with the evolving trends resulting from such economic developments (A. M. Pauceanu, N. Rabie, A. Moustafa, & D. C. Jiroveanu, 2021). Simultaneously, it has been detected that organizational leaders with entrepreneurial leadership traits do not adequately operate to cope with the current business context. This is

one of the reasons scholars consider entrepreneurial leadership a crucial factor in the current global economy (Esmer & Faruk, 2017). Consequently, the notion of entrepreneurial leadership was initiated and became an emerging concept in the business literature (Thani Al Dhaheri, 2020)

According to (Yang, Pu, & Guan, 2019), entrepreneurial leadership is defined as a combination of the leadership and entrepreneurial traits that business managers must retain. However, the concept is a new trend within academia; hence, it has been identified

that entrepreneurial leadership does not act as an extra amenity for businesses themselves but reflects be beneficial at different levels. This means that retention of both entrepreneurial and leadership traits allows business managers to take risks, seize opportunities, and innovate accordingly to excel and succeed in the current competitive business arena, and it is likely to have a drastic impact compared to the industrial revolution (Al-Amin, Akter, Akter, Uddin, & Al Mamun, [2021](#))

Previously the academic business literature has substantially focused on sustainable practices. Thus, the term “Sustainable Development” has significantly been settled as a benchmark to reflect upon the performances and functionalities of businesses. However, there is a noticeable factual gap in the literature about how entrepreneurial leadership influence economic growth and contributes to creating a decent workplace (A. M. Pauceanu et al., [2021](#)). Thereby, the underlying research paper would like to address the research gap and determine the role of entrepreneurial leadership in sustainable development goal (SDG) eight (8), which focuses on decent work and economic growth.

Research Aims and Objectives

The key purpose of this study is to examine the role of entrepreneurial leadership in SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) as the case study of the textile industry of Pakistan.

The following objectives will be attained by the end of this research:

1. To examine the concept of entrepreneurial leadership and decent work and economic growth.
2. To determine a relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and decent work and economic growth.
3. To develop a conceptual framework based on the reviewed literature

4. To propose strategies and recommendations to textile companies operating in Pakistan related to the effective use of entrepreneurial leadership for promoting decent work and economic growth.

Research Question

The primary question that this study aims to address is “what is the role of entrepreneurial leadership and decent work and economic growth in the textile industry of Pakistan?”

Significance of the Study

This research has immense significance from both practical as well as theoretical perspectives. First of all, this study can be useful for textile companies operating in Pakistan to get a unique view related to the role of entrepreneurial leadership in promoting decent work and economic growth. They can take advantage and introduce entrepreneurial leadership, which further results in enhanced work practices and overall economic growth of the organization and country as well. On the other hand, another significance of this research is that future researchers that may continue this study with a broader perspective focusing on specific companies and industries other than textiles.

Literature Review Entrepreneurial Leadership

It is evident that the overall organizational success depends on the effective leadership and managerial abilities of the managers (A. Pauceanu, N. Rabie, A. Moustafa, & D. Jiroveanu, [2021](#)). Similarly, entrepreneurial leadership is a viable leadership trait or an initiative that involves various approaches undertaken by leaders to ensure profitability with relevant probabilities, potentials, recognition of the market level opportunities, activities towards the following developments at the hierarchal level, and activities towards the foundation of business at the individual level (A. M. Pauceanu

et al., [2021](#)). As mentioned above, entrepreneurial leadership is a mix of both leadership and entrepreneurial traits. This means when the entrepreneurial spirit is integrated into the variable idea of leadership, it leads to the concept of entrepreneurial leadership, which can drastically impact the ever-evolving global scenario (Karpinskaia & Shirokova, [2019](#)). This is because entrepreneurial leaders have the ability to go out of the box in search of prospects (Paul et al., [2020](#))

It is important to know that the concept of entrepreneurial leadership distinguishes it from the notion of entrepreneurship. Hence, it is regarded as a unique and innovative style of leading, which directs employees to perform in accordance with the business objectives (Lin, Fu, & Jiang, [2021](#)). According to (A. M. Pauceanu et al., [2021](#)) time-to-time leadership and entrepreneurship are used as interchangeable terms within the literature. However, entrepreneurial leadership is referred to the managers who retain additional innovativeness and creativity. Such individuals hold a directing role, such as an employer, information holder, or theorist, that is interlaced with the association and is perceived while functioning on challenging frameworks.

Additionally, an individual who seeks development, is inventive, strategic, creating, and interchanging, avails opportunities could face challenges and have all the entrepreneurial skills is regarded as an entrepreneurial leader (Herlina, Tukiran, & Anwar, [2021](#)). Moreover, entrepreneurial leaders look at the bigger picture and are known of the changing circumstances and know how to potentially add value to the community, business, and stakeholders (Yang et al., [2019](#)); (Esmer & Faruk, [2017](#)). Furthermore, leaders are highly interested in making economic, ecological, and social opportunities. Therefore, an individual who encompasses all the above-given attributes

of a leader or alludes to the entrepreneur status of the leader is called an entrepreneurial leader, and thus it can be said that entrepreneurial leadership is an integrated form of both entrepreneurship and leadership (A. M. Pauceanu et al., [2021](#)).

SDG Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

(Rai, Brown, & Ruwanpura, [2019](#)) stated that low unemployment, and sustainable and equitable growth has been the top priority of most countries globally. Even though the world is advancing, growth milestones are not attained in many economies. Moreover, violation of labourers' rights and their exploitation is constantly prevailing (Frey, [2017](#)). For instance, around 168 million children are subjected to child labor globally (S. Pereira, dos Santos, & Pais, [2019](#)). However, the initiation of relevant forces, such as demographic changes, globalization, and automation, have drastically transformed the global labor market. But, as per the facts and predictions, the world requires to create around six hundred jobs by 2030 in order to sustain economic growth in most economies (Heirman, Gill, & Caven, [2021](#))

Essentially, the secondary sector, i.e., businesses, dominantly contributes to Goal 8 because they are the primary source of the recruitment and generation of GDP in most countries around the globe (Alzola, [2018](#)). Moreover, establishing decent work – refers to productive work that ensures fair income, social protection for families, allows people to express their concerns, retains better prospects for their own protection, provides equal opportunity and fairly treats male and female employees, and lastly organizes and participates in decision making (International Labor Organization). Thus, economies need to incorporate UN Guideline Principles within their HR policies and corporate sector to ensure decent work because it allows the organization to reflect on how their operations might impact their employees (United Nations, 2021).

According to (Frey, [2017](#)), it is important for companies to realize that their supply chain ventures and business relations drastically impact Goal 8, which means they can fundamentally increase respect for essential labor and human rights. Studies reveal that around 40 best economies intensely contribute to the world's GDP and makeup around 85% of the overall global GDP. Here it was seen that these countries offered over 453 million formal recruitment opportunities related to the supply chain but did not give an opportunity to the employees within the informal work, i.e., non-standard work or work from home. But, involved forced labor and temporary employment, e.g., numbers of employees within various industrial sectors such as textile and electronic are recruited temporarily. Moreover, to promote decent work, businesses must incorporate responsible taxation practices, which will provide national governments with sufficient resources to guarantee decent work at domestic levels.

Entrepreneurial Leadership and Sustainable Development

With respect to the given literature, it has been analyzed that in academia, the concept of entrepreneurial leadership has been highly recognized, and there have extensive research and analysis on the topic (Esmer & Faruk, [2017](#)). Generally, entrepreneurial leadership is a blend of leadership and entrepreneurial skills that leaders and managers in the current competitive business arena must adapt to enhance their overall performance and capabilities to govern (Harrison, Leitch, & McAdam, [2018](#)). This means that corporate managers need to be entrepreneurial leaders and are required to lead by modelling to improve their performance and acquire a competitive advantage. Hence, it has been analyzed that entrepreneurial leadership is one of the crucial aspects that tend to influence overall organizational performance; thus, it is conclusively held that within the existing

competitive business settings, traditional management practices are considered to be outdated and inadequate to cope with rising trends. Thus, it is important for managers to be the risk takers and ones who seize opportunities to succeed (A. M. Pauceanu et al., [2021](#))

As mentioned above, the current competitive and ever-evolving organizational circuit requires managers and leaders to adopt entrepreneurial leadership to increase the overall organizational performance as well as the sustainability of the firms. They have a responsibility to provide a sustainable and fair income to employees, provide them job opportunities, social security, safety at work and other elements so that they can perform their jobs efficiently (A. M. Pauceanu et al., [2021](#)). Similarly, (Yang et al., [2019](#)) analyzed that entrepreneurial leadership traits are more effective and beneficial than the traditional management practices pursued by the managers. They provide employees with enormous benefits and consider their economic and social needs; as a result, employees remain loyal, satisfied, and committed to their jobs. Confirming the claim, numerous scholars have given their views and have stated that not only it improves firms' organizational performance, but it also enhances the organizational innovativeness and creativity of the workers, resulting in an elevation in overall business performance (Mehmood, Jian, Akram, & Tariq, [2021](#))

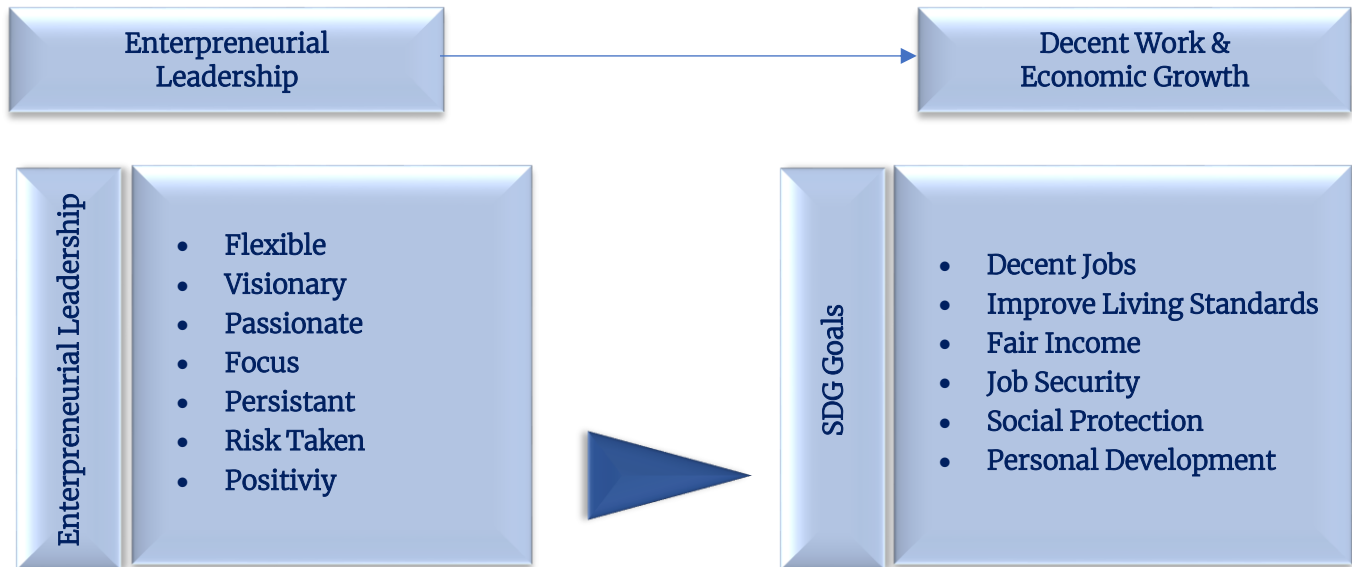
Conceptual Framework

Vision and the "desire to accomplish the vision" are two fundamental elements of leadership. This means that leaders need to have a self-created dream (objectives) and a clear vision to attain those (Handayati et al., [2021](#)). Unlike leaders, efficient entrepreneurial leaders (entrepreneurs) do extra and project necessities that are required to develop a good or service and ensure their timely delivery. In accordance with the given literature, it has been analyzed those

entrepreneurs and leaders are only rewarded when they adequately acknowledge the risks, negotiate, operate to make sound decisions, are

strategic or have long-term objectives (A. Pauceanu et al., 2021)

Based on the above-reviewed literature following conceptual framework is developed:



Research Methodology

Research Approach

A better understanding of the research topic and the problem can be understood by using an efficient research approach, and for this study, the most suitable approach is “descriptive”. In this way, a maximum amount of data can be collected about entrepreneurial leadership, decent work and economic growth (Wilasittha, Putri, & Azmiyanti, 2022). Therefore, a descriptive research approach has been adopted to determine the role of entrepreneurial leadership in SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) as the case study of the textile industry of Pakistan.

Research Method

Considering the research topic and rationale, this study has chosen a qualitative research method. According to (Trevena et al., 2013), qualitative data provides a deeper level of

understanding of context, whereas collection methods for qualitative data are different too. For instance, qualitative data collection questionnaires include open-ended questions for detailed and personalized feedback from targeted audience. Other methods include focus groups, role-playing, observation and case studies (Nassaji, 2015). As described before, the researcher's choice to utilize quantitative or qualitative data in his research is widely influenced by nature, area, as well as objective of his research.

Methods of Data Collection

The collection of data is a well-defined process with clear classification (Trevena et al., 2013). Similarly, (Purwanto & Sudargini, 2021) explained two main types of data collection methods which are further explained below for the underlying research study:

Table 1: Methods of Data Collection

Sources of Data Collection	Description
Primary (interviews)	For this study, interviews (as the key primary source of data collection) have been conducted from the top managerial personnel working in textile companies of Pakistan. They were helpful for generating enough data related to the topic and for analysis (Purwanto & Sudargini, 2021). Furthermore, the sample size of 12 participants was chosen due to time and resource constraints, however, it was sufficient to collect enough data and insights related to the topic.
Secondary	Furthermore, secondary sources of data gathering were also used. They are cost efficient and time saving. It also helps researcher to make his primary data collection more elaborative and more specific according to the context. The secondary data has been used in the review of academic literature related to the research topic (Graue, 2015).

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is one of the data analysis techniques that is used to analyze qualitative data. This technique is mostly applied to textual data, interview transcripts, and video or audio recordings. This research technique acquires to examine and classifies data into common themes like topics, data framework, analyzing data, and forming hypothetical ideas (NAUSHAD, [2021](#)). Moreover, thematic research

analysis involves finding out the people's prospects, desire, experience, knowledge, or thoughts on a particular set of qualitative data (Byrne, [2021](#)). This technique is flexible and can be used to carry out research in different conditions.

However, there are various approaches to carry out thematic research analysis, yet the major ones include:

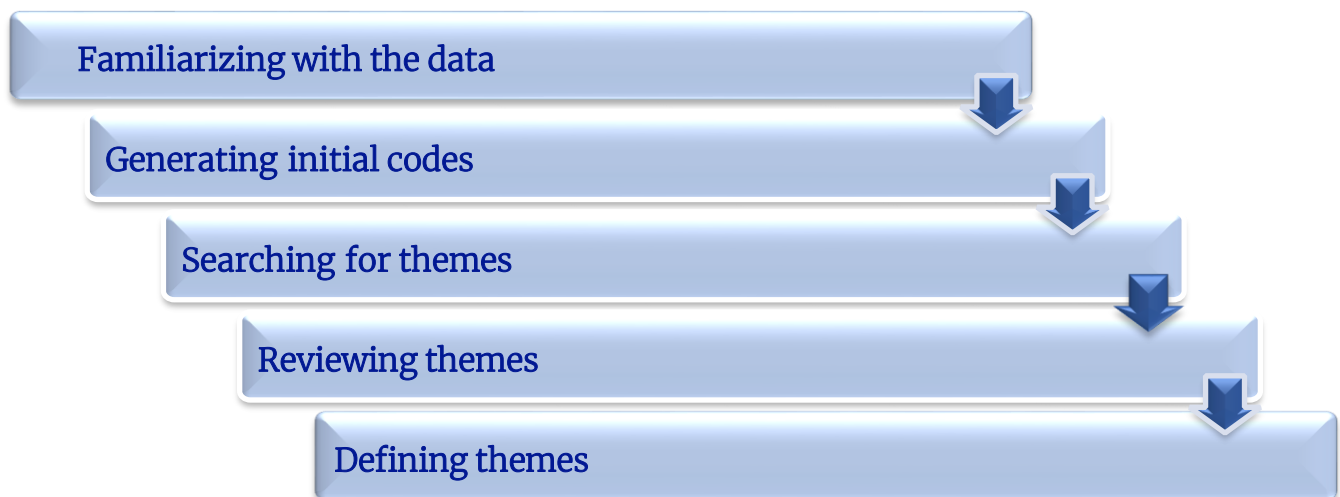


Figure 2: Steps of Thematic Analysis

(Islam & Aldaihani, [2022](#))

Result & Discussion

The following chapter reviews the literature and analyses responses gathered from leadership

personnel of textile companies with the help of interviews.

Table 2: Thematic Data Analysis

Coding	Key Theme
⇒ Intentions ⇒ Supporting sustainable measures ⇒ Partnerships ⇒ Collaborative ⇒ Interconnectedness	Support decent work conditions for all employees via collaboration and partnerships
⇒ Training ⇒ Education to workers ⇒ Focus on marginalized group	Educate and train workers and particularly vulnerable groups
⇒ Job creation ⇒ Business expansion ⇒ Ambitious ⇒ Empowerment	Job creation for across the sector
⇒ Accountable ⇒ Research & development ⇒ Skills development of workers	Supporting business growth and upgrading skills

Theme 1: Support decent work conditions for all employees via collaboration and partnerships

In order to map the supply chains and identify areas that are at a greater risk of labor right violation or are likely to impose a negative effect on society, organizations need to initiate comprehensive measures; for instance, they must implement measures that detect and resolve the issues that prevent workers and suppliers from creating decent working environment (Koehler, 2021)

One of the participants during the interview stated that:

“To cope with the labor rights violation, companies need to commence the idea of “living wages” throughout their supply chain operations. To achieve this, businesses need to develop healthy

relations with suppliers, as well as the government (which plays a central role in the protection of decent work and businesses are required to proactively collide with the stakeholders and governmental authorities in order to ensure regulatory measures to enhance the operational environments”.

Generally, employers and government have the responsibility of protecting employees' rights by inaugurating relevant regulations and policies. Particularly, the protection and promotion of labor rights have been classified into four different categories by ILO's Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (S. A. Pereira, dos Santos, Pais, & Zappalà, 2021). Moreover, such labor rights are universal and are needed to protect regardless of

the economic status of the country. However, where there have been inadequate protection of human rights and labor rights, the decent working condition could not be established (Bianchi & de Man, 2021). Similarly, one of the leaders at a textile company stated that

“Businesses can guarantee decent working environment via incorporating ambitious protocols into their operations that motivate and inspire others to take relevant actions accordingly”.

Additionally, entrepreneurial leaders are capable of optimizing the voluntary actions of their workers, i.e., increasing their engagement and motivation to work, drastically reducing the overall turnover ratios (Svicher & Di Fabio, 2021)

Theme 2: Educate and train workers and particularly vulnerable groups

In order to uphold and operate Goal 8, entrepreneurial leaders need to enable training amenities for the workforce within corporate premises and the community (Hasle & Vang, 2021). Moreover, leading measures play an essential part in acquiring and upgrading the expertise of the labor to offer productive work and sustain employment within the market, which is subjected to pressures such as demographic changes, automation, and globalization (Evans, Kandiko Howson, Forsythe, & Edwards, 2021)

Additionally, companies are required to commence initiatives and programs that focus on developing the skills of disabled youth men and women. It is important that companies must ensure that these practices and training schemes must not limited to the workers involved in in-house operations, as well as the community living in the surroundings in order to attain localized inequalities and guarantee integration (Monteiro, García-Sánchez, & Aibar-Guzmán, 2021)

Similarly, one of the participants stated that they are determined and committed towards workers' empowerment.

“We are focused on empowering our workers to operate in an efficient manner. In order to achieve and ensure the decent working conditions and to alarm our employees regarding good

work, we have empowered our employees by offering those insights regarding success and its fruits and what skills and expertise are required to attain success”.

Another participant stated that:

“We have stayed focused on our objectives and have trained our employees to be subjective to the organizational milestones. However, there has been no need for empathic leadership.”

On the other hand, a review of the literature indicated that an entrepreneurial leader should be empathetic in nature so that they can understand workers' training and development of the workforce.

Theme 3: Job creation across the sector

Businesses are required to create decent formal-sector jobs in order to contribute to Goal 8. Moreover, this will allow companies to lead much more responsibly within the LEDCs (Least Economic Developed Countries) – such countries essentially retain a larger scope for substituting informal employment for formal employment and ensures attainment of the SDG target of achieving growth of seven percent in the GDP per year (van Zanten & van Tulder, 2021). This shows that in order to achieve this, textile companies need to shift their supplier to labour-intensive sectors, enlarge their own operations in areas where there are high ratios of unemployment, and by investing in growing businesses. The dominant and most key players in the market focus on creating decent jobs via decent practices that are consistent with the agenda of 2030.

A leader from one of the leading textile companies in Pakistan stated that;

“We are continuously expanding our business so that people should be provided with employment

opportunities – besides, our growth also contributes to the overall economic growth of the textile industry and our country as well”

Another response:

“Dignity and self-worth are two attributes that allow an individual to contribute towards society. It is we who make society progress and thrive via taking a systematic view and Initiatives on the jobs and resettlement to the future work. These ensure the success of new work standards, such as living wages, fair access to jobs, and integration.”

Theme 4: Supporting business growth and upgrading skills

The private sector generates a considerable amount of share, which ensures a high level of productivity and contributes to overall economic growth. Importantly, this is driven by healthy competition within the private sector, as well as requires stable regulatory conditions. Nevertheless, there are many private businesses that, despite abiding by the regulatory system plays a part in enhancing productivity to achieve SDGs and growth; this is done via relocation of the operations to areas with lower regulatory standards, depriving the executive authorities (government) of the taxes via incorporating avoidance schemes and utilizing tax loopholes, via inadequately regulating the emission of the greenhouse gases, and managing in such a way that it becomes aligned with sustainable development. Whereas dominant market players drive productivity and economic growth according to the agenda set out for 2030 (de Oliveira Claro & Esteves, [2021](#)). One of the participants stated:

“We do this by offering assistance to the growing businesses that have healthy outcomes for the society, by investing in R&D, and enhancing the skills of their employees via adequate training.”

Similarly, another entrepreneurial leader shared his views that his company focuses on

partnerships with schools and higher education institutions so that female employees could be attracted towards the company. In addition to that, textile companies are also focused on sustainable technology, such as introducing new projects related to green energy and the use of sustainable energy production sources.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The reviewed literature and responses from participants have helped to determine the role of entrepreneurial leadership in economic growth and a decent workplace. It is evident that empirically the concept of entrepreneurial leadership is new and has not matured adequately; consequently, the analysis of its effectiveness and influences have still been uncertain. As mentioned earlier, it is an integrated style of leadership derived from entrepreneurial and leadership literatures that are introduced to attain the demands and cope with the complexities of the current business context.

The findings from literature and interviews indicated that corporate firms are responsible for ensuring the protection of human rights within their daily ventures and need to ensure healthy business rapports. The results also showed that entrepreneurial leadership is a viable leadership trait or an initiative that involves various approaches undertaken by leaders to ensure profitability with relevant probabilities, potentials and recognition of the market level opportunities. Similarly, responses from interviews showed that extensive measures are required to integrate entrepreneurial leadership potential towards the attainment of decent work and economic growth. The following recommendations are suggested to textile companies operating in Pakistan related to the effective use of entrepreneurial leadership for promoting decent work and economic growth :



Figure 3: Recommended Framework

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