

## **Entrepreneurial Leadership in a Startup Context: A Comparative Study on Two Egyptian Startup Businesses**

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**Abstract :** Problem Statement: The study examines the important role of leading change inside start-ups and highlights the challenges faced by an entrepreneur during the startup phase of the business. Research Methods/Procedures/Approaches: A qualitative research approach is taken, using the case study analysis method. A comparative study was made between two day care nurseries in Greater Cairo. Non-probability purposive sampling was used and a triangulation of semi-structured interviews, document analysis and participant-observation were applied simultaneously. The in-depth case study analysis took place over a longitudinal study of four calendar months. Results/Findings: Findings demonstrated that leading change in an entrepreneurial setup must be initiated by the entrepreneur, who must also be the owner of the change process. Another important finding showed that the culture of change, although created by the entrepreneur, needs the support and engagement of followers, who should be sharing the same value system and vision of the entrepreneur. Conclusions and Implications: An important implication suggests that during the first year of a start-up lifecycle, special emphasis must be made to the recruitment and selection of personnel, who should play a role into setting the new start-up culture and help it grow or shrink. Another drawn conclusion is that the success of the change must be measured in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Increasing revenues and customer attrition rates -as quantitative KPIs- must be aligned with other qualitative KPIs like customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, and organizational commitment and business reputation. Originality of Paper: The paper addresses change management in an entrepreneurial concept, with an empirical application on an Egyptian start-up model providing a service to both adults and children. This privileges the research as the constructs measured merged together the level of satisfaction of employees, decision-makers (parents of children), and the users (children).

**Keywords :** leadership, change management, entrepreneurship, startup business

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