

Importance of Leadership in the Higher Education

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Abstract: Leadership is accepted as a backbone of the success of the organization. Leaders significantly improves the ability of their followers for the profit of the organization. Accordingly, leadership in the education is more important than other types of the leadership styles in the market, whereas educational leaders are directly shaping the performances of their students that in turn affects the market performance of the country. From this point of view, current paper has discussed the favorable characteristics and the importance of leadership in the educational system. As a result, it has been recommended to have decision making ability to improve the quality of the systems, sharing responsibility with the instructors, and providing positive culture inside the schools to improve lecturer and student performance.

Keywords: Educational Leaders, Decision Making Capability, Quality in the Education System, Lecturer Performance

1. Introduction

Researchers noted that ‘‘Leadership is a function more than a role.’’ Further, leadership is defined by two main functions as showing direction and having influence (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Leadership is having and sharing the same direction with the followers and providing the same sense of meaning and purpose that they are the real collaborators who share goals and aims to achieve them with their followers (Budur, 2008). Further, leadership cannot be defined with some simple words since it is a huge and deep topic in every aspect of life. In this regard, leadership is a form of influence, guide, and provide a sense of the tasks (Altun, 2017; Poturak et al., 2020).

In higher education, leaders are those who have authority in different roles inside the university. Higher education leaders are influencers who provide direction to achieve university goals and objectives (Budur et al., 2008). Leadership functions and responsibilities can be performed in many different ways. The approach of the leader depends on his/her position inside the university and on the type of the goal. School leaders are those that are responsible for providing equity and justice among students as eliminating the discrimination and unfairness, and immediately responding and solving conflicts inside the university (Budur et al., 2021; Mohammed et al., 2020; Serin, 2020). Further, school leaders are also responsible for

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providing the techniques and teaching methods in order to achieve the highest learning rate inside the university (Yildiz & Budur, 2019; Durmaz, 2017; Sahin, 2014).

According to Sathye (2004), higher education leadership is a part of general leadership. However, higher education leadership is different from leadership in private or public organizations. For example, the main purpose of private the organizations are to maximize shareholder value, while the public organizations are to maximize their community value, which refers to the stakeholder value (Budur et al., 2019; Top et al., 2020). On the other hand, in higher education, the main goal is to create valuable students, teams, and funding partners (Sathye, 2004; Yildiz, 2017). Due to academics' different stakeholders, different challenges occur for school leaders. On account of those functions, higher education leadership is not generalized as a topic, whereas it is separated into several parts which include: leadership in teaching and training, leadership in conducting studies and research, leadership in thinking strategically and creating a vision and networking, leadership for collaboration and motivation, leadership in managerial team and efficient working, leadership for justice and fairness, leadership in recognition of good performance and developing interpersonal skills (Ali et al., 2020; Altun, 2017; Demir & Bulut, 2018; Hamit & Durmaz, 2021; Sathye, 2004; Serin, 2018).

Both general and higher education leadership is important because leadership is one of the main factors of success or failure of any sector organization (Budur & Poturak, 2021a; Mart, 2013). Since the style indicates the approaching method of the leader in order to achieve the desired goal (Al Khajeh, 2018; Budur & Demir, 2019), it has been observed that autocratic leadership is not very effective in many cases, but democratic leadership can be the one of the most suitable styles for higher education (Celik & Yildiz, 2017; Torlak et al, 2021a).

In this regard, current paper aims to explain the importance of leadership and their characteristics at the higher education. Leaders hold the power of uniting and sparking people, whereas every leader in every sector and in every country is important and their actions reflect people, and their influence guides people to desired goals. For this specific reason leadership plays the most essential roles for the wellbeing of the people and communities (Kouzes & Posner, 2019). Accordingly, the successful leadership at the education institutions positively and significantly improve the success of the lecturers and the students respectively (Altun & Tahir, 2020).

2. Literature View

2.1 Importance of Leadership at Higher Education

Importance of leadership in businesses and other sectors is undeniable. And due to the multi dimensions of leadership and its styles, the application of each style comes with a different type of importance and cruciality (Al Khajeh, 2018). For an effective organizational performance, a leader should choose and implement the right style for productivity. The right style provides great opportunities inside the organizations, and also allows employees to participate in decision-making processes (Torlak et al., 2021b). Transformational and democratic leadership is found to be the best style for leaders in order to achieve greatness and improve their organizational performance (Budur, 2020; Budur & Poturak, 2021b).

According to Bryman (2007), leadership is similar for both private/public sectors and for higher education. It is dedicated to providing guidance and steps of the activities, anticipating the direction and leading, building the right structure for the direction, creating a supportive environment for improvement and collaborating with the team, building trust among the team and providing integrity, being able to act as the role model and having reliability, promoting participation in the decision-making process and consulting the team, being communicative and expressing developmental purposes, presenting his/her team and networking on behalf of everyone, respecting everyone's approach and culture, and finally protecting the staff independence.

An effective leadership is directly and strongly connected to effective communication (Agnew, 2019; Budur, 2018) whereas a leader with good and strong communication skills can influence his/her team effectively. Especially inside academic institutions and universities, a communicative academic leader can have significant positive effect on the students' learning capabilities (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Rashid et al., 2020). In addition, an effective academic leader positively impacts on the quality of education, curriculum and instructional skills of academicians (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Zaim et al., 2020). No matter what the skills of a higher education president or employer are, the leadership skills are the most effective ones in order to make major decisions and overcome challenges. Accordingly, an effective leader in higher education is the one who makes the right decisions at the right time to improve quality outcomes.

To elaborate more on the effects of higher education leadership; the transformation of challenges and the opportunities can be mentioned. Higher education leadership affects every challenge and minimizes conflicts and eliminates dissatisfaction of everyone involved inside the educational system. A leader in academics is the backbone of education to succeed. Every student and every staff member are positively affected by a good leader. And this gradually reflects their performance. Thus, an effective leader in higher education chooses the goals and guides/works with everyone to reach that specific goal. The main purpose of many leaders in higher education is to have qualified and satisfied staff and students. By this purpose, the leaders get to influence everyone to create a collaborative environment for everyone.

For example, when the pandemic of COVID19 struck the world, the leaders of the United States of America immediately made use of the outbreak and transformed the challenge to opportunity. They without a stop declared education to be continued online. This decision was made and born from the institutions that went along the shared leadership model. It was the leaders of schools, colleges and universities of the USA that decided to perform the strategic decision to undergo remote learning (Fernandez & Shaw, 2020). This decision became a challenge for all the stakeholders, and the consequences were too stressful and challenging for all parties. Teachers were obligated to learn the system quickly along with the students. And this was because most of the academic institutions lacked the technological infrastructures to cope from the first place (Fernandez & Shaw, 2020)

This sudden shift in studying method required changes in attitude, belief and value of stakeholders. Also, it required new strategies and approaches to proceed. This decision was made to achieve the goals in the terms of social distancing and education continuity. Even though this decision was made rapidly by the academic leaders and many faculties were not even consulted in the process, it was essential to fulfill both criteria quickly, to both distant and physical classes to improve learning of the students. (Fernandez &

Shaw, 2020). As to summarize, a leader's role is highly effective and essential in solving problems and in finding new ways to proceed for the best results (Demir et al., 2020; Demir & Budur, 2019).

3. Conclusion

Leadership is not a position nor a role to be played, it is a function to motivate and move with others (Budur, 2018; Zaim et al., 2020). In every country and in every sector, leadership plays the most essential part in achieving goals. A leader is not an authoritarian person that rules and demands, in contrast, it is collaboration with the team and sharing the same values with them yet guiding them. A leader in higher education is someone who has authority over a group of people, such as the dean of students, the president, and the professors in their classrooms. Leaders inside institutions and universities play an essential role in displaying influence to increase organizational performance, besides, the style of leadership is also a great factor for the success of the educational system.

In moments of crises, the leader, who plans and implements new strategic ways to respond to the crises in an effective way. It is the leader who is responsible for every error inside the faculties and among the staff. The crucial point of having leadership in higher education is its power on the community. It is the education that improves and develops people for having a good organizational culture inside an educational system that guaranteeing the formation of innovation, productivity, and accomplishments for the country. Higher educational leadership significantly and directly affects the staff and students. Students respond to good effective leaders inside the university by forming great ideas and by showing good performance.

Many challenges may face higher educational leaders. It is not hidden that many of us are used to represent autocratic leadership and a type of leader in which each member is faced with the potential to lead his/herself is rather new is compared to autocracy, so it be possessing a challenge for the leader as many might think or doubt their potentials in leading. However, most of the universities and institutions have greatly practiced democratic leadership and seen its positive effects in the world. One of the factors that effective leaders are good at in transforming challenges to opportunities and managing crises events. Every educational system has seen conflicts and issues inside it but the ones that implemented transformational leadership, have overcome and got over every struggle.

In some entities and institutions, leaders have confused leadership with being bossy. A good leader is not bossy who usually gains everyone's hatred. A good leader is someone who has a firm and respectable character and personality that is the idol of everyone that he/she influences people around him/herself. In a classroom, a smart professor with strong leadership skills is highly appreciated among students as well as the president of the university or the institution is highly appreciated among his/her staff and employees. Also, in general, a good leader (the president) of a country, influences most of his/her people. And bad leaders such as Donald Trump who was the president of the US or Muammar Gaddafi who was the president of Libya, have been collecting people's hate and dissatisfaction. To data, leadership shows its importance in every sector and in every aspect of life.

As conclusion, a good respectable leader has never been hated or resented. Human nature recognizes good intention and purpose. A leader that is transparent, shares the purpose and guides everyone, has always

succeeded in history and will always achieve the desired goal. Even in some cases the goals could not be achieved, the leader does not lose his/her team. A good teacher/leader in an institute is always appealing to work with. Visions and missions are clear when working with them. Students get more understanding, and the staff get more responsibility and perform in a good manner. Higher education needs great leaders; the education world requires many leaders in order to create students that would be future leaders. It is in the hands of educational leaders to change the future of humanity since every leader has taken the effort to hold a degree to lead a nation. For this specific reason, higher education is the future of humanity, and it is the hope for the survival of the world.

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