Factors Determining the Leadership in Higher Education:
An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

While the significance of leadership in different segments has been spotted in a number of studies, effective leadership from the perspective of higher education hasn't been talked about much. It is important to address the issue of effectiveness of leadership in the educational sector. This includes business schools considering the failures that have been highlighted in this sector because of poor quality of leadership. We need to explore different factors which affect leadership in case of higher education. It has been seen that irrespective of the organisation or country, effectiveness of leadership is one factor which depends on the extent to which the followers accept their leader. This indicates one thing that amongst different issues that have been highlighted, style and practice are some of the most important issues. There are certain crucial factors which affect leadership of the top management of B-schools and the way their style influences the practice of leadership. A sample of 170 respondents in which 57.06% "male" and 42.94% "female" has been considered by a "standard questionnaire" created on five-point interval scale.

Keywords: leadership, leadership style, leadership in business schools, importance of leadership in higher education.

INTRODUCTION:

When we talk about the concept of leadership, ubiquitous is the right term to define it. It indicates the global use of practice of leadership in general discourses. However, several researchers assert that there is no unequivocal or clear understanding of leadership. Therefore it is a bit difficult to distinguish between leader and a non-leader. This attribute has been highlighted in different studies in a number of fields. This includes education as well.

The term leadership is used in a number of fields. Moreover, leadership has become one of the biggest challenges in different contexts and this includes higher education too. It's clear that there is no difference between the private sector and the public sector organisations. Other important factors that might influence the style of leadership between the public and the private sector organisations are related to expectations of the organisation and its stakeholders. The level of public assessment and its effect and the source for motivation of employees are other important factors (Broman et al., 2017).

From the perspective of public sector and especially in context of higher educational institutions, leadership has started to raise concerns for the leaders of business schools. The issue which has cropped up because of lack of efficient leadership exists in business schools. So is the case with each and every organisation irrespective of the type or nature of its business.

Even though the business schools do offer world class education in terms of business, the way in which the leaders of the business schools lead these schools and also the abilities and skills of the graduates from these business schools are all under scrutiny.

There is a need to analyse leaders of the business schools as well as the effect of business education on students who are leaders of future. According to a literature, limited studies have been done which inform about the

practice and research regarding the role and function of deans of the business schools (Hahn et al., 2015).

Some studies also point towards the importance of having capable leaders in the B-schools. This is mainly because of the mission of schools is to offer future leaders. Whether it's happening in reality or not is debatable. There is no evidence which may prove how the deans of B-schools contribute towards producing and offering the future leaders.

While the significance of leadership in different domains has always been highlighted, efficient leadership in terms of higher education including the B0schools hasn't been discussed well.

It is important to address challenges of effectiveness of leadership (Blanco et al., 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Every nation aims at becoming a leader in every domain. The government agencies of all he countries make sincere efforts for achieving this aim. In an effort to get the status of developed nation, the developing countries adopt few strategies. One of the most common strategies include developing human resource. Education is considered to be a primary instrument for the development of human resource. Therefore, it's not surprising at all to see that development of skills and education are given high priority. It's also being hoped that with the help of education, a proper pool of educated, strongly motivated and highly skilled labour force may be developed. Because of the focus on education for the past few decades, we witness mushrooming of educational institutions offering higher education. This development is a positive indicator for any nation. It facilitates the choice of institution for the students and the parents as well. Every year, a number of school pass outs need to decide about their further studies. Some few of them enter the job domain while others go in for further studies. For such students, they are often faced with critical options. Which institution for learning should they choose? Should they register with private or public institution? What is the criteria which would help them in making their final decision? There have been only a couple of studies about the criteria that the students may resort to while choosing higher education institution for professional course. It's becoming difficult day by day for private and public sector institutions to decide as to what they need to highlight (Bloom & McClellan, 2016). Also, due to a lack of proper information regarding how or what the students and the parents need to look for before finalising their decision, a lot of students and their parents find themselves without proper guidelines. These students often make the choice that turnout for being ill informed.

The concept of aspiration is deep rooted in psychology. It is particularly guided by achievement motivation theory. The theory of achievement motivation postulates that a person may learn to acquire his goals. Teachers, friends, parents, etc. might have a strong influence on the motivation of the individual. Therefore, education helps in contributing towards the entire process of forming aspiration (Cheri et al., 2016). Education is helpful in making people gain more knowledge regarding the world. It helps them in becoming more sensitive. It also helps them to understand their relationship with the world and makes them eager to give their contribution towards the process of civilising. It helps them in developing an ability of discerning opportunities as well as option which they might confront in the day to day activities. Formation of occupational and the educational aspirations is an integral component of education. It enables the students in understanding things better. It helps them in understanding who they are, how do they need to function efficiently, etc. The study on aspirations also roots in social comparison and sociology theories. People often compare themselves with groups of same abilities and beliefs. Aspiration has undergone a lot of refinement in terms of its definition (Debowski, 2015).

According to the theory of social comparison, the pressure and need for assessing abilities and beliefs that develop uniformity in the group and theory of motivation describe a conscious desire for performing well. The definition of aspiration which has been derived from these practise is a student's capability of setting goals for his future and being inspired in present for achieving those goals (Fischer et al., 2016).

Leadership which is needed in higher education is known as academic leadership. Some authors state that academic leaders are expected to inspire and motivate their colleagues. This correlates to the earlier statements which say that an academic leader needs to have a proper understanding about how they need to lead people. It also correlates to how to ensure that they feel motivated. Academicians should be prepared well for providing good quality teaching and learning results, collaborate for identification and research the issues of the real world. They also need to lead practical applications of the advanced knowledge for solving issues. This would cause practical application of advanced knowledge for solving issues. Academicians are considered to be leaders who are supposed to offer good quality work. The contemporary model of leadership amongst the academicians is mostly characterised by the person's academic achievements. Apart from the achievements related to research, they often include the elements of service like position held at university, scholar society, etc. (Haddon, Loughlin, McNally, 2015)

Further, another significant segment in academic leadership is regarding the organisation. One of the most common obstacles which most of the organisations face is the challenge of retaining most effective and successful leaders. In the current market situation, these leaders have gained a lot of confidence to enter the labour force. This attracts them to the rival's organisation. They may be allured with better pay package. The features which researchers identify about academic leaders are inspirational personality, skills, experience, knowledge, etc.

The universities are globally facing issues as they are becoming larger, more complicated, multi-faceted organisations. In various countries they are even moving far beyond the traditional core of research and teaching and the older assumptions of funding. They might also become entrepreneurial. This may happen especially where there is strong departments of Science and Technology. According to a latest literature review about new forms of organisations in the sector of higher education, prominent globalisation and marketing have considered to be the meta-level driving force. Developing a competitive behaviour and skills become significant for senior management (King and Nesbit, 2015).

Within a global order, managing across new partners and the conventional national borders becomes more important. Digitalisation within virtual universities is becoming another trend on the basis of strong and effective ICT (Information and Communication Technology). Along with great competition even lies collaboration, with proper strategic alliances, managed networks and joint ventures. All these developments demand a more cooperative, lateral and distinctive leadership style as compared to traditionally seen. The long term developments in this field raise a number of questions regarding the capability of senior leaders of higher education to respond to the increased complexity of the institutions. The major concern here is regarding exploring if the senior leaders of higher education are being supported properly for addressing the current development by the leadership programmes or not. It becomes imperative to consider the issues which are raised by such broader field wise developments. If needed they may refresh their approach and content (McGivern et al., 2015).

Higher education organisations are complex. They are constantly evolving and demand effective leadership. The leaders need to understand and also accept the preferences of the followers they have (Morris & Laipple, 2015). As it has been already detailed out, some of the key components like job satisfaction amongst the employees, and their commitment are all affected by approach of leadership adopted by their leaders. While a proper need for examination of the style preferences of leadership is required from the view point of the follow, it has often been misinterpreted. However, studies have helped in bridging the gaps in research. They have added value for any kind of future studies on preferences of leadership within organisations and higher education institutions (Parrish, 2015).

Researchers have developed 2 main areas. The first one is a comprehensive review of style preferences of leadership amongst the faculty and the employees. Second one is to state if the style preferences of leadership differ between the participants on the basis of classification of faculty and those who are categorised as staff (Meltem, Seggie & Börkan , 2015).

OBJECTIVES:

1. To find out the factors determining leadership in higher education.
2. To know how affective the leadership factors are in higher education.

METHODOLOGY:

The present study is exploratory in nature. A survey method was used to collect the primary data from leaders of higher educational institutes for which a structured questionnaire was developed and used to validate the hypothesis of this study. A sample of 170 respondents has been considered. The sampling method was purposive sampling. Mean and t-test was applied to find out appropriate results of the study.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

Table 1 shows that number of Male respondents are 57.06% and female respondents are 42.94%, respondents, respondents with the age group of 25 to 30 years are 40.59%, those who are between the age group of 31 to 36 years are 27.65% and the respondents with 37 years & above are 31.76%. With reference to the respondents with different positions, 47.65% are principals, 21.76% are Academic staff and 30.59% were administrative staff.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Variables	Number of respondents	%age
Gender		
Male	97	57.06%
Female	73	42.94%
Total	**170**	**100%**
Age group		
25 to 30 years	69	40.59%
31 to 36 years	47	27.65%
37 years & above	54	31.76%
Total	**170**	**100%**
Position / Level		
Principal	81	47.65%
Academic staff	37	21.76%
Administrative staff	52	30.59%
Total	**170**	**100%**

Table 2: Factors determining leadership in Higher education

Sr. No.	Statements	Mean Score
1.	Effective leadership must have effective communication	4.33
2.	Leadership is effective if it is goal and result oriented	3.81
3.	Leadership is effective if it has team building skills	3.89
4.	Decision making skill is important feature of effective leadership	4.39
5.	Conflict management & problem solving skills in leadership	4.08
6.	Assurance of quality & record management	3.88
7.	Leader must focus on improving teaching methods & research	4.25
8.	Human Resource management skills is important for effective leadership	3.78
9.	Effective leadership needs follow-through & follow-up skills	4.20
10.	Develops control mechanism & measure the performances	4.46

Table 2 shows the Mean value for the statements with reference to the "factors determining leadership in higher education," the first statement "Effective leadership must have effective communication" has recorded the mean value of 4.33, next statement "Leadership is effective if it is goal and result oriented" the mean value is 3.81. Third statement is "Leadership is effective if it has team building skills" the mean value for this statement is 3.89; another statement is "Decision making skill is important feature of effective leadership" the mean value for this statement is noted as 4.39. Fifth statement is "Conflict management & problem solving skills in leadership" 4.08., next statement of the topic is "Assurance of quality & record management" the mean value is recorded s 3.88. Seventh statement is "Leader must focus on improving teaching methods & research" the mean value is 4.25, statement "Human Resource management skills is important for effective leadership" has the mean value of 3.78. The mean value is 4.20 for statement "Effective leadership needs follow-through & follow-up skills" and the last statement is "Develops control mechanism & measure the performances" the mean value is noted as 4.46.

Table 3: Factors determining leadership in Higher education

Sr. No.	Statements	Mean Score	t Value	Sig
1.	Effective leadership must have effective communication	4.33	13.100	0.000
2.	Leadership is effective if it is goal and result oriented	3.81	6.820	0.000
3.	Leadership is effective if it has team building skills	3.89	5.250	0.000
4.	Decision making skill is important feature of effective leadership	4.39	12.359	0.000
5.	Conflict management & problem solving skills in leadership	4.08	6.338	0.000
6.	Assurance of quality & record management	3.88	5.019	0.000
7.	Leader must focus on improving teaching methods & research	4.25	11.646	0.000
8.	Human Resource management skills is important for effective leadership	3.78	4.245	0.000
9.	Effective leadership needs follow-through & follow-up skills	4.20	9.288	0.000
10.	Develops control mechanism & measure the performances	4.46	11.979	0.000

Table 3 shows that all the above statements with reference to the factors determining the leadership in higher education are found to be significant, as the t-value for all the statements are positive and significance value is less than 0.05.

CONCLUSION:

It may be concluded that all the above mentioned features are closely related to various experiences of lifelong learnings. It's also strongly believed that these experiences and constant learnings are some of the most valuable aspects which help in developing and shaping well established leaders in education. On the contrary, the individualistic culture of pure, soft, rural and convergent history leaves a lot of room for the academic leaders to select their leadership style. However the contribution of the leaders towards the wellbeing of their departments is valued for sure. "Mean" and "t-test" been used to find out the factors determining the leadership in higher education.

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