

The Role of Leadership in Higher Institutions of Learning in Nigeria. Implications for Educational Administration in Nigeria

Audu Godwin Ankeli (PhD)

Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

Phone Number: 08087023716

Email address: gankegodwin40@gmail.com

DOI: [10.56201/ijssmr.v9.no8.2023.pg243.249](https://doi.org/10.56201/ijssmr.v9.no8.2023.pg243.249)

Abstract

This paper reviewed the role of leadership in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. Implications for educational administration in Nigeria. 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 higher institutions of learning 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 favourable 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: *Role, Leadership, Higher institutions, Educational administration, Quality Education System*

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 Toker, A. (2022). Importance of Leadership in the Higher Education. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies*, 9(2), 230-236. 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 role of leadership in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. Implications for educational administration in Nigeria. 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).

LITERATURE VIEW

ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING

The role 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 (AlKhajeh, 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).

Implications for educational Administrators in Nigeria

Leadership is the act of guiding subordinates towards attaining an organizational goal it involves organizing, planning, coordinating, innovating, initiating and appraising the actions of others with the view of achieving specific organizational goals". (In this case educational goals) Generally, a person is by nature selfish and egoistic. He is motivated by selfish desire that require satisfaction if he is to be happy, when men herd together in large organizations, conflicts will break out among them in the effort to satisfy their desires at the expense of others. This is particularly the case in the school system. Life become a battle in which the strong will win but only temporarily for even the strong will finally succumb in the conflict (a defeated person may organize a group against the victor, for instance and this may take different form). They sum up that: the life of man in the state of nature is solitary, poor, nasty, Brutish and short"

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.

Recommendations

Base on the foregoing, the following recommendations are made:

1. The essence of setting up a school is to attain objectives, goals and aims of the education as a whole in order to increase the literacy level and to make everyone better off with the purpose of being useful and contribute meaningfully for the benefits of the societal growth and development. It is on this note that, it becomes necessary for those who are at various leadership positions within and outside school settings to vary the use of their leadership styles and maintain the one that will help the institution to attain its goals and the same time, consider the welfare of the members in the process of discharging their duties.
2. It is essential and it becomes part of effective leadership style of the school administration in understanding the needs of every school member and making them to work in respect to complementing the efforts of one another towards materialization of pre-determined institutional objectives. It is true that human is a complex being by nature. However, it takes ever responsible leader to having deep understand of the work environment and those that are been led.
3. The school administration body should support the adequate remuneration of the members of staff in the school and show concern by making sure that they work in line with prompt remuneration and other necessary benefits and not toying with the interest of members in the course of their leadership style display. This will go a long way in making every member to be committed to their primary assignments with intention to deliver their best for the success of all.

References

- Agnew, B. (2019). A study of critical incidents in higher education. *Education, and Research*, 89111. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78973-255-920191016>
- Al Khajeh, E. (2018). Impact of leadership styles on organizational performance. *Journal of Human Resources Management Research*, (2018), Article ID 687849. <https://doi.org/10.5171/2018.687849>
- Ali, S. H. K., Khan, N. S., & Yildiz, Y. (2020). Leadership effects on CSR employee, media, customer, and NGOs. *Management and Economics Research Journal*, 6, Article ID 961566, 11 pages.
- Altun, M. (2017). The effects of teacher commitment on student achievement: A case study in Iraq. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*,

- 7(11), 417-426.
- Altun, M. (2017). The effects of teacher commitment on student achievement. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 3(3), 51.
- Altun, M., & Tahir, R. (2020). Motivational techniques in EFL classrooms in the universities of Kurdistan. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 7(1), 88-94.
- Bryman, A. (2007). Effective leadership in higher education: A literature review. *Studies in Higher Education*, 32(6), 693-710. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070701685114>
- Budur, T. (2018). The impact of Al-Ghazali's virtues on organizational commitment and performance: A case Study at private education institutions in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. *Icabep, Erbil-Iraq*, 2, p21
- Budur, T. (2020). *Impact of transformational leadership on customer satisfaction: Mediating effects of employee performance and organizational citizenship behaviours*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). International Burch University.
- Budur, T., & Demir, A. (2019). Leadership perceptions based on gender, experience, and education. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 6(1), 142–154.
- Budur, T., Rashid, C. A., & Poturak, M. (2018). Students perceptions on university selection, decision making process: A case study in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 5(1), 133–144.
- Celik, B., & Yildiz, Y. (2017). Commitment to the teaching profession. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 4(2), 93-97.
- Demir, A., & Budur, T. (2019). Roles of leadership styles in corporate social responsibility to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 5(4), 174-183.
- Demir, A., & Bulut, I. (2018). A new model for respected meetings. *Procedia Computer Science*, 126, 1637-1655.
- Demir, A., Budur, T., & Heshmati, A. (2020). Antecedents of trust, corporate image, and switching costs: a case in telecommunication services in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. *International Journal of Mobile Communications*, 19(1), 53-74.
- Demir, A., Budur, T., Hiwa, M., & Heshmati, A. (2021). Links between knowledge management and organizational sustainability: Does the ISO 9001 certification have an effect? *Knowledge Management Research & Practice (TKMR)*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14778238.2020.1860663>
- Durmaz, O. (2017). Investigation of the motivation parameters in health care establishments. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 3(4), 44-53.
- Fernandez, A., & Shaw, G. (2020). Academic leadership in a time of crisis: The Coronavirus and Covid-19. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 14(1), 39-45. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jls.21684>
- Hamid, D., & Durmaz, O. (2021). Organizational culture impact on employee innovative behaviors in Kurdistan. *Black Sea Journal of Management and Marketing*, 2(1), 63-72.
- Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (2019). Leadership in higher education: practices that make a difference.
- Leithwood, K., & Riehl, C. (2003). What we know about successful school leadership.

- Mart, C. T. (2013). A passionate teacher: Teacher commitment and dedication to student learning. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 2(1), 437-442.
- Mohammed, S. S., Suleyman, C., & Taylan, B. (2020). Burnout determinants and consequences among university lecturers. *Amazonia Investiga*, 9(27), 13-24.
- Poturak, M., Mekić, E., Hadžiahmetović, N., & Budur, T. (2020). Effectiveness of transformational leadership among different cultures. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 7(3), 119–129.
- Rashid, C. A., Salih, H. A., & Budur, T. (2020). The role of online teaching tools on the perception of the students during the lockdown of Covid-19. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 7(3), 178–190.
- Sahin, O. (2014). An investigation of student satisfaction factors. *Journal of Research in Business and Management*, 2(6), 8-1.
- Sathye, M. (2004). Leadership in Higher Education: A Qualitative Study. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 5.
- Serin, H. (2018). The use of extrinsic and intrinsic motivations to enhance student achievement in educational settings. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 5(1), 191-194.
- Serin, H. (2020). The impact of technology-aided instruction on motivation of geometry Learners. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 7(3), 63-72.
- Top, C., Abdullah, B. M. S., & Faraj, A. H. M. (2020). Transformational leadership impact on employees' performance. *Eurasian Journal of Management & Social Sciences*, 1(1), 49-59
- Torlak, N. G., Demir, A., & Budur, T. (2021a). Decision-making, leadership and performance links in private education institutes. *Rajagiri Management Journal*.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/RAMJ-102020-0061>.
- Torlak, N. G., Kuzey, C., Dinc, MS., & Budur, T. (2021b). Links connecting nurses' planned behavior, burnout, job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15555240.2020.1862675>
- Yildiz, Y. (2017). Components of commitment to the teaching profession. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 4(2), 115.
- Yildiz, Y., & Budur, T. (2019). Introducing environmental awareness to college students with curricular and extracurricular activities. *International journal of Academic Research in business and Social Sciences*, 9(3)667-675.
- Zaim, H., Demir, A., & Budur, T. (2020). Ethical leadership, effectiveness and team performance: An Islamic perspective. *Middle East Journal of Management*, 8(1), 42-66.