Leadership and the Higher Education Context

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Abstract

In higher education, successful organizational performance, innovation, and institutional culture molding all depend on effective leadership. This review of the literature delves into the complex aspects of leadership in the context of higher education, looking at how it affects professors, faculty, staff, students, and organizational results. The review explores the changing role of leaders in fostering diversity, inclusivity, and academic performance by synthesizing recent findings. It also tackles the particular difficulties faced by academic leaders, like negotiating faculty governance, handling financial restraints, and adjusting to rapidly evolving technology environments. This review intends to offer insightful information to administrators and scholars who are looking to improve leadership effectiveness and meet the changing demands of contemporary universities. It does this by analyzing these opportunities and difficulties.

Keywords: *Leadership Roles, Higher Education Content, Education Development*

Introduction

Being a leader is more of a role than an occupation. Moreover, influence and direction-setting are the two main responsibilities of leadership (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). To be a leader means to steer in the same direction as your followers, to instill in them a sense of purpose and meaning, and to treat them as genuine partners in achieving those objectives (Budur, 2008). Furthermore, it is impossible to define leadership in a few straightforward terms because it is a vast and complicated topic that impacts many facets of life. This is how leadership functions—guiding, influencing, and communicating an attitude toward responsibilities (Altun, 2017; Poturak et al., 2020).

Leaders in higher education are people who hold power in various positions inside the university. They are motivators who offer guidance to accomplish university objectives and goals (Budur et al., 2008). There are numerous ways to carry out the duties and obligations of leadership. The leader's strategy depends on both the type of goal and his or her position within the university. The responsibility for ensuring fairness and justice among students, reducing bias and injustice, as well as quickly resolving disputes inside the institution falls on school officials (Budur et al., 2021; Mohammed et al., 2020; Serin, 2020). Additionally, university administrators are in charge of supplying the methodologies and instructional strategies needed to reach the university's highest learning rate (Yildiz & Budur, 2019; Durmaz, 2017; Sahin, 2014). The basic objective of leadership in higher education is to produce worthy students, teams, and financing partners (Sathye, 2004; Yildiz, 2017).

Leadership Roles in Higher Education

Every leader, regardless of sector or country, matters because their deeds speak for others, and their influence aids in the accomplishment of personal objectives. People are inspired and unified by leaders. Leadership is extremely important for the wellbeing of the people and communities (Kouzes & Posner, 2019). As a result, effective leadership at educational institutions considerably and favorably influences the achievement of both lecturers and students (Altun & Tahir, 2020).

Higher education institutions are renowned for creating the trained labor required to achieve holistic and sustainable growth. Without strong leadership, these institutions cannot accomplish their planned objectives. Leadership is a crucial component of any company. The faculty is the main driver behind change in any higher education establishment. Academic leaders are critical to the system's ability to effect change, whether it succeeds or fails. Every aspect of the educational system reflects their self-perception and appraisal, attitude toward change, and stance on policy (Adebayo et al., 2018).

Leadership in general and in higher education is crucial because it is one of the key determinants of any sector organization's success or failure (Budur & Poturak, 2021a; Mart, 2013). According to research, democratic leadership has the potential to be one of the best approaches in higher education because it demonstrates the leader's approach to achieving the desirable result (Al Khajeh, 2018; Budur & Demir, 2019). Autocratic leadership is ineffective in many situations (Celik & Yildiz, 2017; Torlak et al., 2021a). Each style's application has a distinct degree of significance and value due to the diversity of leadership and its styles (Al Khajeh, 2018). Selecting and implementing the most productive style for the company is the responsibility of a leader. The right style allows employees to participate in decision-making and presents excellent opportunities within firms (Torlak et al., 2021b). It has been demonstrated that transformational and democratic leadership practices are the most effective for leaders looking to excel and improve organizational performance (Budur, 2020; Budur & Poturak, 2021b).

The job of a leader is crucial in developing fresh approaches to challenges and achieving the best outcomes (Demir et al., 2020; Demir & Budur, 2019). Leadership is a function to inspire and move with others, not a role to be played or a position to be filled (Budur, 2018; Zaim et al., 2020). Leadership is the most important component in every country and industry when it comes to reaching goals. Instead of demanding that things be done their way, a leader collaborates with their group and guides them toward common goals. A leader in higher education is a person who exercises authority over a group of people. Examples of such individuals include presidents, deans of students, and instructors. Leaders in organizations and universities are vital to the success of the educational system in addition to being essential in displaying influence to enhance organizational performance (Toker, 2022).

Although having an effective communication style is immediately and intimately related to being a successful leader, a leader without these attributes is unable to effectively impact their team (Agnew, 2019; Budur, 2018). Particularly in academic institutions and universities, a communicative academic leader can greatly increase students' capacity for learning (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Rashid et al., 2020). Furthermore, curriculum, academicians' teaching abilities, and the quality of instruction are all positively impacted by a capable academic leader (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Zaim et al., 2020). To make important decisions and overcome obstacles, leadership abilities are always the most useful, regardless of the competencies a president or employer in higher education may possess. Therefore, someone who takes the right

action at the right time to improve the quality of the results is a successful leader in higher education.

College student achievement is critically dependent on leadership (Kuh et al., 2005). Campus leadership has an impact on the campus's culture, the programs it offers, the hiring and retention of professors, and the learning resources available to students (Bolman & Gallos, 2010; Love et al., 2009). Campus leaders play a variety of important functions, but they frequently stand apart from and far from students. Because of this, a large number of undergraduate students are presumably ignorant of the many leadership roles on campus and may not even be aware of the identities of those in the most notable roles, such as the institutional president. Student retention may be affected by students' lack of knowledge about campus leaders. Students may find it difficult to get support when they need it and may struggle to have a sense of belonging at the school if they are unaware of the campus leaders (Rizzo et al., 2021). Also, many leaders on college campuses are described as having "the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make difficult decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others" (Muteswa, 2016, p. 135), but sadly, college students' leaders can be daunting to those they are guiding (Kramer, 2006). Many followers are hesitant to ask someone they think poses a threat for assistance (Chindia & Kibera, 2015).

Working with a good leader or teacher in an organization is always appealing. When working with them, missions and visions are very obvious. Students learn more, while staff members take on more responsibility and work well. Great leaders are needed in higher education, and the field of education as a whole needs many leaders to produce students who will become future leaders. Leaders with education can change the path of human history because all leaders have toiled hard to earn a degree to lead a country. For the specific reason that it does, higher education holds out hope for the survival of the planet and the future of humanity (Toker, 2022).

Leadership Context in Higher Education

Higher education must demonstrate relevance, accountability, and societal benefits while dealing with difficult managerial controls (Scott et al., 2008). More resources are required for academics to produce high-quality teaching and learning outcomes, work with others to recognize and investigate challenges in the real world, and take the lead in putting new knowledge to use in solving problems. However, such transformation must be directed because it does not happen naturally in higher education (Bryman, 2007; Scott et al., 2008, 2010).

Notable, the foundation of a country's development has been referred to as education. It fosters the growth of tolerant individuals who can exercise moral judgment in both national and local matters and who are infused with a sense of civic duty (Jegede, 2000). Universities are known for creating the necessary labor force to achieve sustainable and holistic development (Ijaz et al., 2012; McCaffery, 2004). Additionally, it is believed that by supporting public officials' initial and continuing education through seminars, workshops, symposia, and other activities, the sector has regularly contributed to the establishment of national identity (Fagbamiye, 2004). This demonstrates that higher education institutions have a lot of work ahead of them. If higher education is not efficiently and sufficiently managed, it will not be able to accomplish the established aims of its foundation or the demands of the world (Idogho, 2011).

Leadership can be defined by a clearer vision, action, setting an example, ethical/moral connections, trustworthiness, congruence, and collaboration-focused actions (Avolio et al., 2004). Relationships with leaders have an impact on organizational productivity, follower wellbeing, positive relationships, job satisfaction, and turnover (Avolio et al., 2004; Boyatzis

et al., 2012). It should come as no surprise that a leader's actions affect the performance of those they lead and elicit an emotional response (Dasborough, 2006). 'Resonant leaders' can control their emotions and motivate their team members to work in challenging situations (McKee & Massimilian, 2006). Resonant leaders are dependable, empathetic, perceptive, and aware of how their stress and emotions affect other people (Dasborough, 2006). These characteristics are consistent with emotional intelligence, which has been connected to successful academic leadership (Parrish, 2013). "Resonant leaders cultivate harmony, value input, and participation, and rely on coaching rather than coercion" (Johnson, 2002, p. 2). People who work with resonant leaders are devoted to the group's objectives and aware of the request(s) being made of them. On the other hand, a manager who demonstrates discordant tendencies uses aggressive tactics to motivate employees, frequently with no assistance or support. Dissonant behaviors that reduce team performance include betrayal, micromanagement, and insensitivity (Frost 2004; Johnson, 2002, p. 2). Negative outcomes of detrimental, cruel, or vicious leadership have an impact on the well-being and productivity of people as well as organizations (Boyatzis et al., 2012; Einarsen et al., 2007). Such rudeness and harmful actions "produce poisonous emotions," which have a detrimental impact on both teamwork and people's well-being" (Boyatzis et al., 2012, p. 261; Clark et al., 2012).

In times of crisis, the leader devises and puts into action fresh tactical solutions to deal with the crisis. Every mistake made by faculty members and staff members is the leader's fault. The ability of leadership in higher education to influence the community is vital. People must be enhanced and developed by education to create a strong organizational culture within a system of education that guarantees the country the production of creativity, accomplishments, and productivity. Leadership in higher education has a substantial and direct impact on the faculty and students. Students generate amazing ideas and achieve well when they have good, effective leaders in the university (Toker, 2022).

The models of leadership and the attributes that effective leaders must possess to guide organizations in this age of increased efficiency and accountability continue to be the subject of much research and discussion (Avolio et al., 2004; Boyatzis et al., 2012; Cuddy et al., 2013; Dasborough, 2006; Einarsen et al., 2007; Johnson, 2002; McKee & Massimilian, 2006). In higher education, the notion that effective leadership and management are essential to enhancing institutional governance, relevance, learning, and teaching is supported by research on effective formal leadership and management aspects (Bolden et al., 2009; Bryman, 2007, 2009; Middlehurst, 2008; Parrish, 2013; Ramsden, 1998; Scott et al., 2008, 2010). Despite the large body of research on official leadership roles, there is a paucity of information regarding how faculty members in non-formal leadership roles in higher education cultivate and apply leadership in teaching and learning (Juntrasook et al., 2013; Middlehurst, 2008).

According to certain theories, formal academic governance should include both leadership and management, which are two distinct but essential components. People who fill these positions have different effects on the teaching and learning culture (Marshall et al., 2011, Ramsden, 1998). To guarantee that the managerial objectives of the organization are successfully realized, those with management responsibilities concentrate on administrative procedures, duties, and responsibilities (Ramsden, 1998). Effective formal leaders have been proven in a national survey to have traits including current knowledge, self-awareness, competence, and the capacity to affect higher education achievement (Scott et al., 2008). Similarly to this, Bryman (2007, p. 697) stated that leaders should emphasize "vision, integrity, consideration, and sense of direction" after analyzing international literature to identify 13 forms of leader behavior linked to departmental-level effectiveness (p. 697). Effective people in formal

leadership roles exhibit emotional intelligence as well as a collaborative and consultative attitude that aids academics in performing well (Bryman, 2007, 2009; Parrish, 2013).

The calls for less hierarchical leadership paradigms and more relevant democratic cultures have recently sparked interest in leadership literature in higher education institutions (Jones et al., 2012). There is a growing belief that everyone must exercise leadership (Bolden et al., 2008). To that aim, it has been suggested that distributed and collective leadership styles can help academics build shared accountability for altering cultures in higher educational institutions (Bolden et al., 2008; Jones et al., 2012; Middlehurst, 2008). To develop leadership skills in teaching and learning, the focus of distributive leadership is on " collaboration rather than individual power and control" (Jones et al., 2012 p. 67). Thus, these discussions call for an understanding of and consideration of the contentious leadership meanings in higher education institutions, including "leadership as position; leadership as performance; leadership as practice; and leadership as a professional role model" (Juntrasook, 2014, p. 22-27). Interestingly, effective cultural transformation in higher education is not just an event but rather a skillfully guided process that involves everyone's learning and unlearning (Scott et al., 2008).

Connecting quality processes and education development

Seemingly, the significance of leadership education cannot be overstated. Nearly everyone in modern society is expected to take on leadership responsibilities at some point (Northouse, 2009), and fears about the scarcity of good leaders (Burns, 1978) have endured for many years (Rosenthal et al., 2007; Schwab, 2007; Ashford & DeRue, 2012). Universities across the country provide leadership training, and more are beginning to do so every year, apparently in response to the need to create stronger leaders (DeRue et al., 2011). Indeed, developing future leaders for influential roles across a range of fields is a goal outlined in the mission statements of the majority of institutions (Brookfield, 2012).

According to Astin and Astin (2000), everyone who works on campus, including staff, faculty, and administration—has the potential to be leaders, regardless of their official positions. They write, "Students will implicitly generate their notions and conceptions of leadership from interactions inside the classroom and in the residence hall, through campus work and participation in campus activities, and through what is taught intentionally and across the educational experience" (p. 7). College students frequently evaluate leaders based on their charm, level of responsibility, and concern for others (Zekan et al., 2012). College students frequently adopt a hierarchical and systematic view of leadership (Vari, 2005), which has consequences for the potential boundaries of expansive leadership thought. According to Caza and Rosch (2013), college-level students viewed community service, open-mindedness, maintaining high ideals, and ease with change as four attributes that were essential for leadership.

Developing leaders must be the main priority if higher education is to improve teaching and learning. Although there is a lot of literature on developing formal leadership, there has been less research on how academics in non-formal leadership roles improve their leadership in teaching and learning. Research leadership and success are demonstrated by metrics such as money and publications. While there exist measurements for teaching and learning, their use and appreciation are rather low (Hofmeyer et al., 2015). Future leader preparation has always been a top priority in higher education, but there have been concerns about whether this goal is being achieved. Although education research indicates that taking into account students' pre-existing attitudes about leadership can improve leadership development, little is currently known about these views (Caza & Rosch, 2014).

Traditionally, the emphasis of leadership preparation has been on enhancing the competencies, expertise, or specific material (informational learning) of leaders. Although informational learning is crucial for both teaching and leading, this kind of growth and development is insufficient for modern leadership. An increasing number of practitioners and scholars believe that learning and professional development for principals in university and field preparation programs should include curricula and processes that center on authentic learning and individual development rather than on primarily knowledge and skill acquisition (Byrne-Jiménez & Orr, 2007; Donaldson, 2008; Kegan & Lahey, 2009).

This study argues that transformative learning is necessary for effective leadership preparation. To better handle the challenges of teaching, learning, leading, and living, this type of learning strengthens our cognitive, interpersonal, affective, and intrapersonal capacities (Drago-Severson, 2004b, 2009, 2012; Kegan, 2000). The goal is to support leaders in developing the inner skills necessary to support both their own and others' growth. Changing how we know is as important as changing what we know when it comes to promoting transformational learning in leaders. When someone receives transformational learning, their style of knowing, or their meaning-making system, changes qualitatively. As a result of this development, leaders who are aspiring or already in the field have more internal resources at their disposal to support both their schools and other organizations. Sergiovanni's (1995) more comprehensive examination of leadership highlighted the school leaders' "beliefs concerning how schools work, the purpose of school, and the nature of leadership . . . act as road maps guiding the person's actions and behaviors" (as cited in Crow & Glascock, 1995, pg. 24).

Notwithstanding this institutional support for leadership education, questions have been raised around the effectiveness of present initiatives because it appears that students' observable behavior (Yukl 2010) or views have not changed much (Lord & Hall 2005). For instance, a survey revealed that university students still hold the view that leadership is only possessed by a small number of people with unique, exceptional traits (Schertzer & Schuh 2004). Students do not appear to acknowledge the overwhelming evidence that leadership is not innate but can be taught, even though this knowledge is prevalent in higher education (Avolio, 2010; Kezar et al., 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2008; Komives & Wagner, 2009). It is not unexpected that there have been several requests for schools to reconsider how they train the next generation of leaders given the disconnect concerning educational intent as well as student attitudes (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999; A.W. Astin & Astin, 2000; DeRue, Sitkin & Podolny, 2011).

Leadership is seen as a factor that significantly affects how well companies, managers, and workers function (Sathye, 2004). It is defined as a group of behaviors, attitudes, and characteristics exhibited by the leader that support and boost followers' engagement, commitment, and personal growth. The driving force for change in higher education institutions is academic leaders. They determine whether the system works or not (Shahmandi et al., 2011). The success of its leaders affects the higher education, staff, and students' effectiveness (Bass & Riggio, 2005). The most crucial elements that establish the higher educational institutions' reputation are the work habits of academic leaders, their level of acceptability, and their willingness to change (Harris, 2008). In higher education, effective academic leadership is dependent on several variables or traits, including collaboration and motivational leadership, interpersonal skills, fair and efficient management, networking and strategic vision, performance development, and recognition (Ramsden, 1998).

The progress of education is significantly impacted by the global financial crisis and economic slump, particularly in emerging nations (Obasi, 2000). The declining quality of education

reflects this. A failure to keep up with the worldwide trend in information and communication technologies, low student attendance at lectures, inadequate supervision, corruption in postsecondary institutions, and a decline in the commitment and dedication of lecturers to their jobs are all consequences of this falling standard for higher education (Arong & Ogbadu, 2010; Chinelo, 2011; Odia & Omofonmwan, 2007; Duze, 2004; Ogum, 2007; Akinsanya & Omotayo, 2013; Anya, 2003).

The system was allowed to grow for a considerable amount of time without adequate resources, which led to a disastrous decline in quality and an increasing number of graduates entering an already crowded labor market with inadequate training (Odhiambo, 2018). By adding the quality aspect to the analysis of learning in a phenomenological study on learning in higher education, specifically from the perspective of the learners, students can go beyond the conceptualization of learning as expanding an individual's knowledge, understanding, reproduction, goal fulfillment, and self-development as well as to the conception of learning as durability of knowledge and employability (Bamwesiga et al., 2014, 348).

It is necessary to ensure that graduates create a robust society and growth to ensure that there is a robust connection between higher education and the employment market, which will guarantee Kenya's full potential. Improving academic responsiveness to the increasingly intricate demands of the labor market and industry requirements is a basic area by which university institutions can contribute to the nation's development (Odhiambo, 2018). In an attempt to close the skills gap, employers and universities have partnered in recent years due to the differences in learner skills and market needs. The main goal of sustainability has been to connect and network university students and leaders in industry (Wanzala, 2017). Pan Africa Christian (PAC) University hosted a conference as a prototype for the university-industry sustainability platform, in collaboration with Visions of Hope for Africa and the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA).

To secure employment and contribute positively to both the workplace and Kenyan society at large, graduates must be well-prepared. According to the British Council (2014), there are three main areas of work that universities should concentrate on: improving the quality of taught courses for students; facilitating broader learning experiences; and offering feedback on target employability (a reflection on one's aptitudes and how that reflects given information about career opportunities; skill-enhancement programs in addition to stronger employer relationships). What counts more than student enrollment at colleges is the caliber of education they provide. Because universities are essential to the development of work skills, technological innovation, involvement, and overall growth, there is a pressing need to reframe the idea from access to quality, or more precisely, to access with quality (Odhiambo, 2018).

International evidence has shown that higher living standards and stronger economies are associated with higher-quality university sectors. Nevertheless, similar to Kenya's experience with the introduction of free primary education, many universities are experiencing a decline in quality due to their rapid expansion, which is posing similar challenges to infrastructure strain and standard drops (Odhiambo, 2014). Few graduates acquire the necessary abilities to obtain employment (British Council, 2016), and this quality difficulty is most apparent when graduates enter the workforce. Employers nationwide lament the lack of fundamental, transferable skills and the high unemployment rate among recent graduates (British Council, 2014; Nesoba, 2012). Ten years ago, it may take a graduate up to five years to get employment in Kenya (Omolo, 2012).

In the processes of transformative learning and critical reflection, the teacher's role is crucial. Teachers using transformational learning approaches must be willing to take chances, challenge cultural conventions around discipline, and critically evaluate both their practices and their students' work (Neuman, 1996 as referenced in Taylor, 1998).

A critical understanding and problematization of a teacher's positionality are essential components of transformative learning (Montgomery, 2014). Educators must comprehend pedagogy and develop transformational intellectuals as a means of producing culture (Giroux, 1992). Teachers' identities may be impacted by this journey, which can be emotionally taxing and highly personal. Because people's identities are complex, navigating unfamiliar concepts might cause us and other students to react in conflicting ways (Boyd, 1989; Clark & Dirkx, 2000). On the complexity of the self, Erichsen (2011, p. 126), writes that it is "a process ever negotiated and accomplished in interaction with the significant actors in a person's life and within varying social contexts", wherein we are reconstructing our life experiences and rewriting our narratives, a process Gill (2007) refers to as "the reweaving of the fragmented self" (Gill, 2007 as referenced in Erichsen, 2011, p. 111). According to Kreber (2004), transformative learning thus concerns both our ontological and epistemic identities. Therefore, before assisting their students on their journey, teachers must be guided through these challenging regions to deepen their own understanding (Author, 2005; Neumann, 1996).

Several approaches to leadership development are emerging (Anderson et al., 2008; Browne-Ferrigno, 2007; Byrne-Jiménez & Orr, 2007; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Stoll & Seashore-Lewis, 2007; Wagner et al., 2006). Because leadership orientations have a direct impact on practice, it is imperative to study how programs and courses affect leaders' thinking and development. Thinking and acting are related (Argyris, 1982; Gardner, 2006; Kegan, 2000). Findings from a longitudinal study related to this requirement examined how graduates of a university-based school leadership course called Leadership for Transformational Learning (LTL) were influenced by their leadership practices and thought processes throughout three consecutive courses (2003, 2004, and 2005). These grads' course was indicative of a larger, long-term, multi-context, leadership preparation and professional growth developmental strategy (Drago-Severson, 2004b, 2009, 2012; Drago-Severson et al., 2013).

Studies (Danzig, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Donaldson, 2008; Fullan, 2005; Murnane & Willett, 2010) demonstrate that when adult development is supported well, schools become places where everyone can progress. Research has demonstrated that when people learn and develop in schools, pupils gain, and their achievement increases (Donaldson, 2008; Guskey, 1999; Mizell, 2007). Furthermore, it is a fact that strong school leadership plays a significant role in school development (Barth, 1990; Howe, 1993; Moller & Pankake, 2006). The establishment of developmentally oriented cultures (Evans, 1996; Glickman, 2002; Sarason, 1995), the development of teacher relationships (Barth, 1990, 2006; Bolman & Deal, 1995), and the emphasis placed on teacher learning (Johnson, 1990, 1996; Johnson et al., 2004; Moller & Pankake, 2006) are three ways that school principals can support teacher learning.

Regarding the internationalization and globalization of leadership development, several governments are promoting principal exchanges and reciprocal visits in addition to supporting principal development models with comparable goals, namely school improvement. Regarding the expanding concept of leadership development, at least three new factors should be taken into account. The first involves a more rigorous understanding than in the past, with regard to the connection between leadership and other important school processes, objectives, and activities, like teaching and learning (Dimmock, 2000). The second has to do with how leadership is acknowledged as a distributed phenomenon in schools and how it develops at the

teacher and middle management levels in addition to the more conventional ideas that focus on senior management and principal levels. Thirdly, identifying senior and main leadership based on stages is important. Three categories can be distinguished: experienced, newly appointed/inducted, and aspirational.

According to Marope et al. (2017), a change in teaching must be supported by appropriate Continuous Professional Development, which facilitates the adoption of successful pedagogies. Teachers generally aim to be successful in promoting learning. Evidence presented by Griffin et al. (2017) showed that it was simpler for teachers to make long-lasting changes to their methods once they were shown how particular activities enhanced students' learning. Four elements are presented by Joyce and Showers (2002) as part of teacher professional development. All four of these elements should be included in effective professional development for teachers: The training should include the following components: Practice and Feedback in Training (long-term opportunities to practice, share, and learn together); Theoretical Knowledge and Discussion (theoretical & pedagogical knowledge to stimulate and challenge thinking about worthwhile student outcomes); Coaching in Classroom Settings (coaching/collaboration discussion/reflection with peers to process and deepen learning) (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Timperley, 2010).

The 21st century higher education leadership context for transformation

The quality of the undergraduate experience has been the main focus of higher education in the twenty-first century. Legislators, parents, businesses, and members of the public have all voiced complaints about how expensive college is and how, worse yet, how unprepared students are for the workforce after graduation. These criticisms, along with data indicating falling completion rates, have led to an increase in institutional assessment projects, the implementation of performance indicator systems, increased responsibility for student outcomes, and a host of other initiatives aimed at improving education (Kuh et al., 2015). I argue that learning outcomes should be at the core of this discussion. In addition to the quality component, learning analysis enables students to go beyond the idea of learning as expanding one's knowledge, comprehension, self-development, and goal fulfillment. It also enables students to think about learning in terms of knowledge durability and employability (Bamwesiga et al., 2014, 348).

There has never been any doubt about the importance of education, as there is now in our culture. The work market has questioned graduates' education and learning. Despite appearing to be "educated" and "learning," it appears that these individuals of society have not truly complied with societal expectations of what constitutes "educated" and "learned" by the time they graduate. Though many people use the terms interchangeably, education and learning are not the same. Mezirow (1991) observed that "the issue is not only to acquire new knowledge but to develop new glasses to look differently at reality and existing knowledge" when he developed the transformative learning theory thirty years ago.

Serious and fundamental questions have been raised about the quality of teaching and learning in universities. They have to do with fast-changing delivery and teaching methods, the cost and quality of courseware, faculty professionalization, and openness to the diversity of learners (Bokor, 2012; Bradley et al., 2008; Norton et al., 2013). Universities' choices about how to respond to these challenges will have an impact on how they compete as well as staffing, design, and teaching and learning programs are created and delivered. Proponents of transformational change in higher education assert that services provided by universities in the future will be offered in national and global marketplaces rather than state and regional ones,

and occasionally in virtual delivery models instead of brick and mortar (Harden, 2012). I indeed, there have long been debates and change agents in the university sector; that being said, there is a rise in the frequency of discussions and a palpable sense of anxiety that is motivating action both inside and between universities. Cost, effectiveness, competitiveness, and viability concerns are becoming more closely associated with student results, responsiveness to their needs, and curriculum quality (Kuh et al., 2015). These results lead to heightened attention on the way institutions are set up to provide services.

Getting a university degree has many advantages for young people in particular as well as for society as a whole. Enhanced employment options and career prospects, enhanced life quality, and increased economic growth are some of these (AAI, 2015). According to the 2015 State of Higher Education in Africa Report, Africa reaped 21% of global returns on investment from higher education spending. All of this is true despite the fact that just 6% of young people in sub-Saharan Africa were enrolled in higher education institutions, as opposed to the global average of 26%. However, given that enrolment is surging in many African nations, there is cause for optimism (Odhiambo, 2018).

According to a 2015 World Bank report, an average one-year rise in tertiary education levels would result in annual GDP growth of 0.39 percentage points in Africa or a total GDP increase of 12%. The Kenyan education system has grown rapidly during the last 15 years or so (Mukhwana et al., 2016). According to a survey conducted by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the education sector was one of the main drivers of the Kenyan economy, accounting for 5.0% of GDP (KNBS, 2016). Even with the fast expansion of higher education in Kenya, there are still significant doubts about Kenyan universities' ability to turn out graduates who can lead the nation forward. Many people have expressed worries about the employment of recent college graduates, the skills they bring to the workplace, and how much of a contribution they make to the advancement of national goals (British Council, 2014; Wanzala, 2015). As a result, the value and standard of Kenyan university education are still being hotly debated (Odhiambo, 2011).

The prospects for Kenya's economy are not as bright as they should be, considering the high rates of youth unemployment and the ongoing shortcomings of the educational system in providing a better, universally mandated education. A recent evaluation of the impact of university education on development, approved by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), finds that quality has a limited influence among other criteria. Separately, another recent audit inspection report that was made public on February 16, 2017, depicted a dire picture of university education in Kenya (Commission for University Education, 2017).

Universities are trying to invest more in skills development since it is seen as strategic by nations, businesses, and individuals. For the majority of nations, developing their workforce to have the skills needed for both today's and tomorrow's jobs is strategically important for their country's growth and development. Ultimately, a nation's ability to prosper depends on how many of its people are employed and, in turn, on their output, which in turn depends on the skills they possess and how well they apply them, which is the foundation of good work. Future generations are better prepared for their productive lives when they receive high-quality primary and secondary education in addition to relevant vocational and university training. This gives them the essential skills they need to advance in their education and make meaningful contributions to the development of their countries (Odhiambo, 2018).

There is considerable doubt that there is a connection between university education and employment, even if universities' missions in terms of the labour market are to generate skills and knowledge rather than necessarily to provide jobs. According to West (2000), companies hire recent graduates; people pursue higher education to advance their careers; research has the power to create new industries or destroy old ones; and governments, who fund higher education on behalf of the general public, frequently and generally anticipate financial returns on their investment.

The quality and relevance of higher education programs are one of the hardest things to evaluate in any place in the world (The World Bank, 2017, p. 51). It appears that the rapid increase in enrolment has come at the expense of university quality in Kenya, notwithstanding the absence of a systematic assessment of quality standards in recent years. Pedagogical techniques in many higher education institutions remain mostly traditional, with an over-reliance on rote learning combined with curricula that are extremely theoretical and obsolete (The World Bank, 2017, p. 52). Universities are also troubled by the general drop in quality.

The drop in infrastructure and teaching resources, inadequate governance, and outdated curricula and assessment methods are all indicators. All of this has left universities unable to continue providing high-quality instruction and learning (The Conversation, 2018).

Individuals, societies, and the economy as a whole should all benefit from targeted and well-structured skill development (Pavlova & Maclean, 2013). According to Barth and Rieckmann (2012), and I agree with them, education—both postsecondary and higher education—plays a significant role in changing cultures. Universities are considered micro cities due to the direct and indirect influences on their social, physical, and intellectual atmosphere, as well as their size, population, and the kinds of activities that take place there (Alshuwaikhat & Abubakar, 2008). The problems facing humanity today are multifaceted, intricate, and dependent on one another, necessitating creative solutions. Universities now have a new role to play in promoting sustainability from two perspectives: 1) knowledge generation and human capital development; and 2) implementation and sustainability role modeling in infrastructure, operations, management, finances, etc. This creates new challenges, particularly for university governance and leadership.

According to Rowley and Sherman (2003), leadership in academic circles is a crucial factor in learning and growth processes that improve institutional creativity and innovation. Being a leader in a higher education institution can be difficult and confusing because these establishments are complex, ever-evolving, and have many established aims and principles (Petrov, 2006). Because academia adheres to the concept of collaborative governance, it is predicated on the idea that redefining and developing higher education institutions is linked to various leadership styles above and beyond managerial competencies and qualifications (Rowley & Sherman, 2003).

The focus of curriculum and pedagogical modifications needs to be on improving the effectiveness of delivery and changing the content of the programs. Kenyan establishments should push higher education institutions to shift from traditional teaching methods to more interactive, collaborative, and experiential learning in an attempt to provide incentives for those interested in and eager to transform their educational approach. In all this, leadership is vital.

Conclusion

The complex nature of leadership in the academic setting has a big impact on the results for teachers, students, and organizations. This review of the literature emphasizes how important effective leadership is to influence institutional culture, encouraging creativity, and achieving

institutional success in higher education. It emphasizes the growing duties of academic leaders in fostering diversity, inclusivity, and academic performance while also highlighting the substantial effects of leadership on faculty, students, and organizational outcomes by looking at several studies. The combination of these results provides insightful information for academics, administrators, and legislators who want to improve leadership performance and adapt to the changing demands of contemporary higher education. Higher education institutions can better support a pleasant academic climate, encourage continuous progress, and guarantee ongoing growth and quality in the twenty-first century by placing their priority on transformative and inclusive leadership techniques.

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