Critical Literature Analysis of Leadership and Cross-cultural Management: A Glance on the UAE Higher Education Context

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to highlight appropriate leadership and cross-cultural models in higher education as a unique context. It focuses on scholar's recommendations for top administrators to lead faculty members in a proper way, especially since the higher education context is unique and leadership within this context is unique as well. The literature of cross-cultural management in higher education gives an important role to cultural awareness of leaders who need to understand the mind-sets and national characters of individuals such as their courtesies and customs. This paper also uses Hofstede's (1991) cultural dimensions in order to study the characteristics and cultural components of Emirati people and of expatriates who come from different countries like the U.S, Britain, France, Spain, China etc.

Keyword: Leadership, Cross-cultural Management, Higher Education, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Introduction

This paper critically reviews the literature of Leadership in the higher education context. Top administrators need to support faculty members and empower them in order to achieve a high quality of teaching and research. Leaders should also know how to deal with politics in higher education since they have to keep it away from the university in many cases, and they should use it in other cases to bring resources to the university and create opportunities for faculty members (Ramsden, 1998). Creating a vision and working to achieve it is another essential role for higher education leaders in order to provide a high quality of teaching and research (Ramsden, 1998). This paper also reviews the literature of cross-cultural management, including Hofstede's (1984; 1986; 1991) discussions about the importance of leaders in achieving a successful cross-cultural context and Trompenaars (1993), who differentiates between inner-directed people and outer-directed people and the impact on their careers and working environments. In this paper there is also a review focusing on the Arab cultural characteristics specifically the UAE and expatriates cultural characteristics like the American, British, Spanish, French etc. cultures based on Hofstede's (1991) cultural dimensions model as the UAE includes expatriates from those countries.

1 Higher Educational Leadership Literature

Higher educational leadership has an important role among senior administrators to help academics preserve academic freedom. This section focuses on scholar's recommendations for top administrators to lead faculty members in a proper way, especially since the higher education context is unique and leadership within this context is also unique. The leader's skills vary by his level of education and knowledge, and leaders in higher education should have very high leadership skills (Drucker, 1955).

This section includes three main roles of higher education leaders that scholars focus on in the literature of higher education leadership. Firstly, it presents the way higher education leaders should lead faculty members. Ramsden (1998) argues that appropriate leadership in higher education positively impacts faculty members in their role to achieve high qualities of teaching and research that are the two core activities of the university. According to Ramsden (1998), in this changing world that is affecting many western and Arab universities and shifting them into huge organizations, a higher education leaders' role is empowering faculty members and creating ownership on what they teach and the way they teach it, and this is essential and should be protected.

Secondly, this section discusses how higher education leaders should deal with politics in universities and how they should have political intelligence in many cases in order to keep politics away from the university (Bezzina, Starratt and Burford, 2009). On the other side, higher education leaders should use politics to get best for the university by seeking resources and generating opportunities for faculty members (Ramsden, 1998). Thirdly, this section focuses on creating the right vision and working on achieving it regardless of all of the challenges those leaders may face. The most important vision in higher education is building the academic community and creating an educational environment that goes even beyond the university and leaders should have clear objectives to achieve this vision (Murphy, 2002).

1.1 Leading Faculty Members

Evans and Lindsay (2005, p. 204) define leadership as "the ability to positively influence people and systems under one's authority to have a meaningful impact and achieve results". Some higher education institutes are more focused on strategy, policy, and processes than leadership (Osseo-Asare, Longbottom and Murphy, 2005, p. 158). Osseo-Asare, Longbottom and Murphy (2005) argue that leadership is essential for vice-chancellors or presidents, deans, and heads of programs and departments in both academic and administrative departments. Osseo-Asare and Longbottom and Murphy (2005) recommend that quality managers should be aware of this and support those administrators in developing and improving leadership skills such as creating a mission and values, balancing research and teaching, and developing communication, empowerment, and support to academic staff. According to Osseo-Asare, Longbottom and Murphy (2005), leadership should not be separated from processes since it is a skill that is integrated in everyday activity at all management levels. According to Seymour (2005), the main concern of higher education leaders is to ensure the future of the institute. Professors should be semi-autonomous and self-directed leaders in higher education (Carvalho and Downing, 2011; Côté and Allahar, 2011; Deem, Hillyard, and Reed, 2007; De Wit, 2010; Fanghanel, 2009). Leadership is crucial for the success of universities in this changing world according to many scholars. For example, Ramsden (1998, pp. 13-14) argues that the university has changed into a 'mass higher education system' in which leaders have to deal with, " [n]umbers, finances, structure, purposes, students, governance, confines, technologies, the amount of knowledge available and its diversity have all changed... and will continue to have revolutionary consequences for how universities are run, what university staff do and how academic leaders work". According to Ramsden(1998), when 'executive leaders' like vice chancellors in higher education support faculty and communicate clear ideas of development and change to them, they help them in better teaching and more effective research processes.

Some scholars argue that academic leaders are different from other leaders since they are in a position of teaching and research, which constantly enhances their education and would give them the chance to distinguish themselves from different managers. According to Drucker (1955, pp. 415- 418), " Whether [the manager] develops his subordinates in the right direction, helps them to grow and become bigger and richer persons, will directly determine whether he himself will develop, will grow or wither, become richer or become impoverished, improve or deteriorate... [what] distinguishes the manager above all others is his educational one". Bottery (2004) defines five components of professional leadership and management in education: provisionality ethics where leaders should be aware of the limits of their judgments, truth searching ethics where relativism is not accepted, integrity ethics where leaders should limit personal perceptions, humility ethics and considering personal fallibility as a factor of human being and not fail, and humanistic education ethics where the duty of leaders is helping people around them to help themselves. Similarly, Byham (1992, p. 247) argues that "Empowerment in education means getting students to take responsibility for their own progress by involving them in decision making, encouraging them to think for themselves and fostering trust, creativity, and a hunger for new challenges, but in order to empower students, teachers first need to empower themselves". Burdett (1996, p. 33) defines empowerment as: "the voluntary transfer of ownership of a task or situation to an individual or a group having the ability and willingness appropriate to that situation, in an enabling environment". Ownership is also essential in higher education leadership. According to Moon and Smith (1998), ownership is essential in private and public organizations and empowerment helps staff achieve ownership of their process and commitment to develop them. Baume and Kahn (2004) argue that when one of the faculty members becomes a dean or a vice chancellor, he/she does not usually 'have a clue' about managing a team and has to work on developing some skills, and might think that academics do not like to be managed but the fact is that they like to be managed well. In universities, leaders have to inspire, develop, manage, and support academic colleagues (Ramsden, 1998, p. 4). Leaders in higher education should have professional ethics, they should be aware of their judgments, search for the truth, and limit their personal perceptions (Bottery, 2004).

1.2 Higher Education Leaders Dealing with Politics

Many higher education leadership scholars focus on the role of leaders in dealing with politics whether it is inside the university or outside and impacting the university. According to Davies, Hides, and Casey (2001, p.1025) leaders have an important role in implementing strategies, communicating policies and creating a vision. Leaders in higher education should keep politics away from educational debates and outcomes measurement, and they should have political intelligence to rise above obstacles caused by politics (Bezzina and Starratt and Burford, 2009, p. 548). According to Ramsden (1998), academic leaders should be good politicians and good managers at the same time by combining high intellectual scholarship with superior skills in politics and giving it an instrumental role. Ramsden (1998, p.84) explains that "[s]killed politicians, they seek resources and generate new opportunities for staff in the department, both in teaching and in research, [t]hey keep the ship afloat while leading it into new waters". On the other side, there are disadvantages of politics in higher education. Baume and Kahn (2004, p. 37) argue that one of the essential challenges that face higher education leaders is the "time spent on internal politics, fighting to save the unit or aspects of it, in terms of its location in the institution and its role in key policy development". Politics in higher education institutes takes different shapes, leaders may misuse politics in universities among its small community through sending different messages to people in the university or giving specific information to some people and not others. Baume and Kahn (2004, p. 173) consider that in most of the cases faculty have to sacrifice 5 % of a project in order to get the 95 % approved because of politics. Good higher education leaders make the maximum of their political resources through exploiting power for this purpose, and power is not evil and leaders should maximize their power to achieve benefits for the department (McCaffery, 2010, p.315). Leaders in education should be good mangers and politicians at the same time and they should give politics an instrumental role for high intellectual scholarship (Ramsden, 1998). Higher education leaders should use their power and political resources to achieve benefits for the departments, faculty, and students (McCaffery, 2010, p.315). The biggest challenge that faces higher education leaders is the time they spend fighting to develop a policy or save a department (Baume and Kahn, 2004, p. 37).

1.3 Leaders Creating the Right Vision

Higher education leadership scholars also discuss the role of leaders in creating the right vision of the university. For example, according to Davies, Hides, and Casey (2001, p.1025) universities need to shift their visions under the current conditions:

A more focused organizational vision is needed that includes an outward-facing, Customer- centred element, which is at conflict with the inward-looking culture that previously was prevalent in universities. The main sources of these pressures on higher education establishments are students, the government, the business community and the local community.

However, Ramsden (1998) argues that leader's role in higher education is to ensure that policies are adhered to and labour laws are followed and establish committed teams around him/her since people are committed to a person more than to a system. This is the reason why caring about a shared vision starts from personal visions as a leader who is committed can create personal visions among his team that become one shared vision, and therefore the result would be commitment and not compliance (Frazer, 2005). According to Murphy (2002), one of the most important visions is community building, and leaders should be involved in forming a community of learners in their educational organizations and the environment beyond, they should work on daily basis to influence learning among staff, faculty and students. Leaders in higher education should create their own visions: Ramsden (1998) argues that credible visions are those that represent the educational leaders as academic staff, they understand the nature of academic work and sympathize with their colleagues' needs and they deliver a high quality of teaching and research and also play a role as a model to other faculty. According to Evans and Lindsay (2005, p. 223), "The vision describes where the organization is headed and what it intends to be; it is a statement of the future that would not happen by itself". In accordance, leaders must know where they are going and what achievements they want, and therefore they need to create visions and choose the right methods to implement that will lead them to their visions. They have to come up with good ideas regularly, set agendas, and most importantly have credible visions. One of the university visions would be: "....vision of the strengths of people and of how the university might best contribute to the creation of greater knowledge and well being" (Ramsden, 1998). When leaders have their own vision, they can create personal visions amongst their people and have one common vision to achieve (Frazer, 2005).

This section includes the leaders' role in higher education, and the way they support faculty and create a culture of self- leadership among academic staff through professional autonomy and scholarly activities. Higher education leadership scholars discussed above focus on empowerment, managing politics, and creating a vision as the three important leadership skills in higher education. Leadership in higher education should be unique due to the uniqueness of this context. This literature highlights the importance of support that leaders should give to faculty members, the way leaders should deal with politics in the university through using it for the best of the university and the community as a whole, and eliminating it in many circumstances that affect the university negatively. In addition to this, the literature focuses on the role of leaders in creating the right vision in higher education and working to achieve it: for example, Evans and Lindsay (2005, p. 207) who argue that "Effective leadership requires five core leadership skills: vision, empowerment, intuition, self-understanding, and value congruence."

2. Higher Educations Cross-cultural Management Literature

This section uses the cross-cultural management theories of Hofstede (1984; 1986; 1991) and Trompenaars (1993). The purpose of this section is to address multi-cultural staff and diversity in universities in the UAE. According to Hofstede (1991), leaders in a multi-national context should not only learn the courtesies and customs of people who work with them but also mind-sets, management philosophies, and their national characters. Trompenaars (1993) explains that there are two types of people in the way they deal with their external environment: inner-directed and outer-directed people and this affects the way they view the world around them and thus their working environment and career as a whole. This section also uses Hofstede's (1991) cultural dimensions in order to study the characteristics and cultural components of Emirati people and of expatriates that come from different countries like the U.S, Britain, France, Spain, China etc.

2.1 Diversity Awareness in Higher Education

In an organization that is culturally diverse leaders have a critical role. They may face many challenges that require a lot of understanding of cross-cultural communication and the values and enforcement of organizational values (Moran, Harris, and Moran, 2007). Just like other staff, people who belong to minority cultures want to be valued and not just tolerated in order to work effectively (Kouzes and Posner, 1995). This also applies to higher education, where both administrative and academic staff wants to be valued, especially in a professional culture that requires academic freedom. According to Young (2003), effective cross-cultural training does not have a simple model, and instead it depends on the needs of each context or organization since the cultural composition varies. In higher education, faculty members need to have academic freedom in teaching methods and research. Unfortunately, people who structure programs in the university set the level of freedom or lack of freedom for students and faculty in what they will do research in or get exposure to (Ottewill and Laughton, 2000; White and Usry, 1998).

According to McCaffery (2010, p. 29), diversity is considered to be a new concept that emerged in the mid of 1990s as a result of the detrimental consequences of equal opportunities in organizations. Middleton and Rodgers (1999, p. 32) define diversity as respecting all individuals, the differences between them, and the fact that each one is unique. Diversity may include visible and invisible characteristics like disabilities, ethnicity, gender, nationality, personality, and functional background (McCaffery, 2010). Globalization is impacting universities' contexts, by which universities are now multicultural leading to ethnic, religious, cultural, and social diversity. According to White and Usry (1998), the university's responsibility is not only embracing diversity but also fostering ways to tackle problems of disharmony and fragmentation.

Cultural awareness and sensitivity are essential in any cross-cultural organization. According to Lane and DiStefano (2000, p. 183), this includes awareness of "how another person's culture affects his or her behaviour" in addition to recognizing of how our behaviour is shaped by our own culture. Hofstede (1986) also discusses the importance of understanding and learning about different countries and cultures like 'belief systems', 'rituals', 'cultural symbols', norms and behaviour, and cultural values. Nancy (1995) emphasizes the importance of cultural differences awareness through working in cross-cultural teams, developing skills of cross-cultural discussions, and resolving cross-cultural clashes. In addition to this, Ottewill and Laughton (2000) and Saghafi (2001) state that psychological maturity, emotional energy, and cognitive complexity are crucial personal characteristics. Cui and Awa (1992) discuss other characteristics of cross-cultural awareness including self-esteem and flexibility. Rhinesmith (1996) argues that cross-cultural competencies can be developed and improved through selfawareness and self-questioning in order to lead to a transformation of mind set and personality.

2.2 Leaders Role in Cross-Cultural Management

According to Trompenaars (1993), a successful cross-cultural relationship includes caring where cross-cultural leaders should express caring about the individuals within a cross-cultural context. Trompenaars (1993) also discusses the importance of mindfulness or carefulness within a cross-culture, in which leaders should show respects and empathy to each other's cultures and the cultures of all individuals. Commitment is another characteristic that he explains cross-cultural leaders should have as an essential behaviour, in which should differences and difficulties arise leaders will commit to preserve a successful relationship among diverse individuals. Trompenaars (1993) argues that commitment, mindfulness, and caring should have continuity over time, where both leaders and individuals should have to continue developing and enhancing their own cross-cultural skills. Rayner and Gunter (2005) define cultural diversity in education as personal and social factors of individual differences that are the main aspect of any educational setting. Through a case study of educational research in the US, Lee (2008) deduces:

... we cannot articulate a generative and robust science of learning and development without explicit attention to the diversity of the human experience. The National Science Foundation and the Institute of Education Sciences, the two largest sources Offederal funding for education research, both explicitly call for attention to Diversity. (Lee, 2008, p. 272)

Bartlett (2000), and Rayner and Gunter (2005) argue that diversity is not a problem that should be resolved or dealt with in higher education, however it is a resource that brings a lot of value to the university context. According to Alexander (2004), cultural diversity adds a lot of pedagogical value to higher education through several distinctive pedagogies, which contributes to academic professional development for faculty members and leaders. "The implications are that there exist or might be constructed different forms of pedagogy, a combination of which educationists will need to acquire as they develop their own professional pedagogic expertise" (Rayner, 2009, p. 437).

2.3 Cultural Diversity in the UAE

Cultural diversity in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) universities is a fact that should be taken into consideration in any management system that any university is implementing. UAE culture is part of the Arabic culture that has its own characteristics and way of doing business. At the same time, the world all around us is changing at an unprecedented pace. Technology and globalization are affecting our lives and causing major changes (Sara, 2007). The workplaces all over the world are indisputably affected by this change, and UAE workplaces have changed as well through the past 25 years. The workplaces in UAE have changed due to many reasons like the increasing number of expatriates, women entering workplaces, and the government encouraging nationals to seek jobs in the private sector. Al-Shamsi and Fulcher (2005) show that Arabs in UAE are more committed and want to stay in their organizations for longer, however expatriates look for more salaries and benefits and are less committed. UAE women are also part of the changes in UAE workplaces. Although Emirati women are conservative due to their Islamic culture, many are seen in the workplace today. Emirate females are more educated now and more involved in business and the government although an Emirati woman's most important role in life is to get married and have a family (Al-Shamsi and Fulcher, 2005).

The increase in the number of expatriates in the UAE has led the workplaces to adopt conditions that suit them. Jobs in the private sector are usually given to expatriates with a temporary residency through renewable work visas, however the public sector jobs are given to Emirates nationals with flexible hours of work, job security and superior employment conditions. Emirati Graduates are usually employed in the public sector, however to build an Emirate management and leadership potential to manage the country's future development graduates are forced to seek work in the private sector by the government (Tanmia, 2006).

As a result, there is now more diversity within the public and the private organizations in the UAE, which attracts expatriates from different countries in the world. All of those changes are also applicable to universities in the UAE. This highlights the diversity in public and private universities that has increased, and there are now expatriates from different nationalities interacting with each others and with locals. Simultaneously gender diversity is increasing, especially with the high presence of Emirati women in the university communicating with Emirati and expatriate men, and even with women expatriates from similar but not the same cultures like Arab women or expatriate women from different cultures like western women. This applies whether those individuals are academics, administrators, or students.

When studying cultural diversity in the UAEit is important to refer to Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions as he included the Arab countries in his model. It is also beneficial to glance through this model of cultural characteristics of different people for different countries who live in the UAE. After interviewing 116,000 employees from different 50 countries, his study in 1980 revealed the following four dimensions, and then a fifth was added after research in China and South East Asia (Hofstede, 1991).

- Power distance: it measures the response of subordinates to power and authority. In high power distance
 countries (Spain, France, and Latin America, most Asian and African countries) subordinates are scared of
 their superiors and their superiors are autocratic. In low-power distance countries (U.S, Britain, and most of
 Europe) superiors use a consultative management style.
- Individualism/ Collectivism: in individualistic cultures (France, Germany, South Africa, Canada, etc.), people look out for themselves and their immediate families. In collectivist cultures (Japan, Mexico, Korea, Greece) the person's strength and protection are in his loyalty to the group.
- Femininity versus Masculinity: in feminine cultures people have a good relationship with their supervisors and cooperate well with people they work with like in Sweden, France, Denmark, and Indonesia. When the masculine index is high like in the US, Japan, Mexico, Hong Kong, and Italy, people tend to get their recognition and then have a challenge to do more work and derive a sense of accomplishment.
- Uncertainty avoidance: in cultures with strong uncertainty avoidance people avoid unknown situations like in South Korea, Japan, and Latin America. Innovation and deviations are considered threatening and dangerous. In cultures with weak uncertainty avoidance like the US; the Netherlands; Singapore; Hong Kong, and Britain people are more open to risk and deviation is not considered threatening so greater tolerance is shown.
- Long-term versus short-term orientation: long-term orientation values are associated through thrift, perseverance and persistence like in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and India. A short-term orientation is based on protecting one's reputations, and fulfils social obligations like in Britain, Canada, the Philippines, Germany, and Australia.

According to Hofstede, people in the Arab countries like to do business in places out of the office like in a hotel lobby, which shows the counterpart's willingness to come. The culture in the Arab countries has a high power distance and uncertainty avoidance where the leaders separate themselves from the subordinates, and they are also high rule-oriented with regulations, rules, and laws to reduce uncertainty. Inequalities of wealth and power in the Arab countries grew in the society where the regulations, rules, and law were developed by people in power to increase their power and where these two dimensions combine together. Consequently, the culture in the Arab countries does not accept change. The Masculinity index is high, and this is because of the Muslim beliefs rather than the cultural paradigm. Hofstede's lowest dimension for the Arab World is the individualism ranking. The culture in the Arab world is collectivist, where the commitment to the group and family is dominant. Arabs are long-term thinkers because they have commitment and respect to their religion and argue that they work hard today for a better future.

This section addresses the multi-cultural staff and diversity in universities in the UAE. The literature review of cross-cultural management in higher education includes Hofstede (1984; 1986; 1991) and Trompenaars (1993). Hofstede (1986) gives an important role to cultural awareness of leaders who need to understand the mind-sets and national characters of individuals such as their courtesies and customs. The cultural dimensions of Hofstede (1991) are reviewed to recap the major cultural characteristics of Emirati people as Arabs and of expatriates who live in the UAE. Trompenaars (1998) distinguishes between people who are inner-directed and people who are outer-directed and how this affects their view of the world, their working environments, and their careers.

In conclusion, the higher education leadership literature is reviewed to present the literature that discusses how universities should be lead for the sake of including the role of higher education leaders in a new management model of the UAE universities to be built in future research. Cross-cultural management in higher education is also discussed to include cross-cultural awareness in the higher education management model in future research.

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