

Leadership Competencies and Institutional Efficacy in Selected Colleges/Universities in China: Towards Leadership Development Plan

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Abstract

Over the years, university administrator's aim is to polish a wide-ranging set of paramount practices that exemplary leaders and teachers follow in normal times. However the onset of the current pandemic seems to be a vital test for college and university administrators across the world. While some have augmented to the circumstance, others are struggling to manage this crisis of unprecedented proportions. The benefits that can be derived by such administrators and teachers will surely pave the way for the realization of set goals and priorities in the institution. This study will be undertaken to assess the strategic leadership competencies of the administrators of three universities and two colleges in Guangdong province of China; namely Huizhou University, Guangzhou University, Shaoguan University, Huizhou Economic Vocational and Technical College and Guangdong Peizheng College. Of the five universities, three are public and two are private and to measure the efficacy of the said universities and colleges in the context of the challenges and demands of pandemic in the 21st century. Furthermore, this research focused particularly on variables affecting the leadership competence of the administrators in terms of professional technical skills; human personal skills; strategic management planning; leadership/fellowship skills; communication skills; and decision-making skills. The institutional efficacy of the universities and colleges was discussed in terms of the following: strategy, role clarity, on human resource and continuous improvement/ innovation.

Keywords

Leadership; Leadership competencies; Institutional efficacy.

1. Introduction

Leadership competencies establishes a paramount function in diverse types of educational organizations. The aim of institution of learning is to move the performance of their employees at par with the global market. They can make changes, importance, and create evaluation between average employees and excellent managers. The latent authority of an institution is to possess excellent or above average employees, through the exclusion of average employees with continuous education and the development of their personality. In spite of the fact that there are a lot of theoretical knowledge and concepts, the introduction of a strategic competency approach is not quite a simple process. This means genuine change, with the aim of refining performance across the educational system. And these truths and realities require a transformation for each employee.

The recent concern in our society has produced a period of high pressure and anxiety for individuals and universities alike. It is also, however, a favorable chance to evaluate existing college and university practices in order to increase long-term operational efficiency, efficacy

and competitiveness, as well as to revolutionize for the sake of enduring now and thriving later. Likewise, this is an opportunity to shield the core education system and revolve to new opportunities, or, in other words, to make use of and to explore.

To achieve leadership competencies, reflect leveraging cross-functional teams, employing creative exercises, adjusting expectations and deliverables, supporting an agile innovativeness and generating customer insights.

Institutional effectiveness reckons on a leadership adaptive capacity to transcend adversity, with all its accompanying importance and to emerge stronger than before. In this pandemic situation, strong leaders in the field of education must respond and adjust to fluid circumstances across the organization in a climate that changes day by day and hour by hour. As we begin a prolonged adjustment to the “new normal,” responsible, thoughtful university, colleges and vocational administrators must prepare for a significant shift in education operational priorities. The strategic leadership competencies which likely has served the system well up to this point – will need to be revisited and adapted to this extraordinary and unprecedented crisis.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative methods. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data can improve an evaluation by ensuring that the limitations of one type of data are balanced by the strengths of another. This will ensure that understanding is improved by integrating different ways of knowing.

Questionnaire Survey. The research will utilize the following: 1. instrument on assessments of the strategic leadership competencies of the administrators was partially adopted from the compilation of HR Performance Management Competency Examples with Performance Statements 2016 and 2. Organizational Efficacy taken from GENOS Organizational Effectiveness question bank (2017) www.genosinternational.com with modification done by the current researcher to suit to the present study. The researcher may float questionnaire online using Google Form for the utilization of the teacher respondents. There will also be questionnaires to be distributed to the administrators in the different colleges and universities in Guangdong province of China.

Interview. A semi-structured interview using focused group discussion will also be conducted this is to give necessary time or opportunity for the administrator respondents to articulate their views in their own terms about concerns on providing the continuity of students' education processes and identification of emerging challenges and concerns faced by them that never before seen or felt in education while COVID-19 pandemic is still going on.

Sampling Method. The sample size will be computed through the use of Slovin's formula. A sample size of respondents will be needed to arrive at the most common confidence level interval of 95% and margin error of 5% (Hayes, 2020).

2.2. Research Locale and Research Participants

This study will be undertaken to assess the strategic leadership competencies of the administrators of three universities and two colleges in Guangdong province of China; namely Huizhou University, Guangzhou University, Shaoguan University, Huizhou Economic Vocational and Technical College and Guangdong Peizheng College. Of the five universities, three are public and two are private and to measure the efficacy of the said universities and colleges in the context of the challenges and demands of pandemic in the 21st century.

Stratified random sampling to gather data and identifies 61 administrators and 448 teacher respondents from the research locale.

Selected colleges and universities in Guangdong Province of China as the research locale because Guangdong is known as China's economic powerhouse. It has the largest and fastest-growing economy in terms of GDP among the 31 provinces and municipalities in the Chinese mainland. Guangdong is also home to the Pearl River Delta (PRD) Economic Zone and the Shantou, Shenzhen and Zhuhai Special Economic Zones. Similarly, it is more convenient for the researcher to collect data for this is the place where the researcher works and lives.

2.3. Statistical Treatment of the Data

The SPSS data analyses include the following methods, descriptive analysis, Weighted mean calculation, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation analysis.

Before the analysis, a verification of questionnaire validity and reliability will be conducted by running Cronbach's Alpha Test.

3. Presentation, Analysis, And Interpretation of Data

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

	Profile Variable	Frequency	Percent
Age	30 and below	48	9.40
	31-40	251	49.30
	41-50	174	34.20
	51+	36	7.10
Sex	Male	246	48.30
	Female	263	51.70
Education	BS	315	61.90
	MA/MS	145	28.50
	PhD	49	9.60
Position	Leadership/Management	61	12.00
	Teacher	448	88.00
Length of Service	5 and below	48	9.40
	6-10	138	27.10
	11-15	129	25.30
	16-20	100	19.60
	21-25	60	11.80
	26-30	24	4.70
	31+	10	2.00

As presented Table in 1, the respondents are grouped by their age, sex, education, position, and length of service. As to age: Majority come from the age group 31-40 while the least come from the group 51+. As to sex: majority are female which is a typical scenario in the academic community. As to education: majority are having their Bachelor's degree which is a usual deviation in the topography of higher education institution. As to position: majority are plain teachers. As to length of service: majority are from 6-10 years while the least come from 31+. Thus, it can be said that the respondents come from a diverse group.

Table 2. The Leadership Competencies of University Administrators

Leadership competencies		Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Professional technical skills	2.92	Agree
2	Human personal skills	2.89	Agree
3	Strategic management planning	2.92	Agree
4	Leadership/fellowship skills	2.94	Agree
5	Communication skills	2.92	Agree
6	Decision making skills	2.91	Agree

Table 2 presents the general leadership competencies of university administrators in the locale of the study. It shows that their competencies are not optimized as evidenced by the means which fall in the mean range of 3 (2.50-3.24) and interpreted as agree: Hence, an emerging culture is observed.

Table 3. Test of Relationship between the Leadership Competencies and Institutional Efficacy of University Administrators

		Strategy	Role clarity	Human resource	Continuous improvement
Professional technical skills	Pearson Correlation	.791**	.816**	.798**	.787**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
Human personal skills	Pearson Correlation	.779**	.775**	.768**	.783**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
Strategic management skills	Pearson Correlation	.769**	.762**	.768**	.752**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
Leadership/fellowship skills	Pearson Correlation	.777**	.774**	.784**	.769**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
Communication skills	Pearson Correlation	.775**	.776**	.771**	.765**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
Decision making skills	Pearson Correlation	.765**	.759**	.768**	.753**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

Table3 presents the relationship between leadership competencies and the institutional efficacy of the administrators. These variables are essential to understanding the leadership competencies of school administrators and how they impact institutional efficacy. As presented

in the table, all the parameters of leadership competencies are significantly related to the parameters of institutional efficacy at .01 level.

Table 4. Common Concerns of University Administrators

Code	Interpretative Concept	Claim
DM 1 TS 1	decision making skills Technical skills	"...the new challenges faced by university administrators are the new iterations of the Internet and big data. The advancement of big data has put forward higher requirements for university administrators..." A1
HR 1	Human Personal Skills	"...the job of an administrator is difficult because we are generally dealing with highly educated, relatively independent people..." A2
HR 2,	Human Personal Skills	"...the executive's challenge is mainly centered on carrying out the tasks assigned by the leadership. Especially in the process of implementing decision-making plans, due to problems such as their own abilities and work attitudes, the standards may be lowered or even completely out of shape..." A3
HR 3 SM 1	Human Personal skills Strategic Management skills	"...The work content of university administrators is basically fixed and repetitive, and they are prone to job burnout, resulting in a lack of enthusiasm for work..." A4
TS 2 SM 2	Technical skills Strategic management skills	"...the challenge of university administrators comes from the need to improve information literacy. Make full use of Internet technology and modern information and communication equipment to digitize and share complicated daily work..." A5
SM 3 LFS 1	Strategic management skills Leadership/fellowship skills	"...the work of university administrators is very complicated..." A6
HR4 SM 4 LFS 2	Human Personal Skills Strategic Management skills Leadership/fellowship skills	"...the biggest challenge is that there is little room for career development for executives..." A7
HR5 SM 4 LFS 2	Human Personal Skills Strategic Management skills Leadership/fellowship skills	"...the biggest challenge is the low sense of job accomplishment..." A8
SM 5 LFS 3	Strategic Management skills Leadership/fellowship skills	"...the communication issue is also a challenge. Administrators need to communicate effectively with different levels of personnel, departments, and students, faculty and staff..." A10
HR 6	Human Personal Skills	"...Colleague relationships not only affect our work efficiency and career development, but also affect our mental health and quality of life..." A11
LFS4	Leadership/fellowship skills	"...to properly handle the relationship between all aspects..." A12
SM6 LFS5	Strategic Management skills Leadership/fellowship skills	"...Universities should foster an open and inclusive academic climate where teachers and students know that their views..." A13
SM7 LFS6	Strategic Management skills Leadership/fellowship skills	"...the bigger challenge is to do a good job in risk management..." A15

DM2	Decision Making Skills	
TS 3	Technical Skills	"...think the biggest challenge is ensuring psychological and social support for students during online learning during the pandemic..." A16
HR 7	Human Personal Skills	"...administrators often face work-family balance, a challenge many professionals face..." A17
SM8	Strategic Management skills	"...closely aligned with the central work of the school. The central work of the school usually includes academic teaching, student development, scientific research innovation and service to society..." A18
LFS 7	Leadership/fellowship skills	"...one of the challenges is getting others to recognize the value of the executive's work..." A19
SM9 DM3	Strategic Management skills Decision Making Skills	"...there are still situations where educational administrators emphasize use and neglect training, which may lead to some adverse consequences..." A21
LFS8	Leadership/fellowship skills	"...the fear of doing more and making more mistakes may hinder the initiative and innovation spirit of administrative staff, and affect the enthusiasm and efficiency of work..." A22
SM10 LFS 9	Strategic Management skills Leadership/fellowship skills	"...ability of administrators to deal with emergencies is crucial, especially in a complex and diverse organization like a university..." A23
SM 11 LFS 10	Strategic Management skills Leadership/fellowship skills	"...administrators should be good at organizing experience exchange, and experience exchange is very important..." A24
SM 12 LFS 11 DM4	Strategic Management skills Leadership/fellowship skills Decision Making skills	"...to stick to the original intention of serving, because the main mission of a university is to serve students and education..." A25

As it can be seen in Table 4, majority of the concerns deals with the strategic management skills of the university administrator with 12 identified themes, 11 for leadership or fellowship skills, 7 for human personal skills, 4 for decision making skills, 3 for professional technical skills, while no identified concern for communication skills.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following are concluded:

4.1 The emergence of a developing culture encompassing professional technical skills, human personal skills, strategic management skills, and leadership or fellowship skills among university administrators suggests that their leadership competencies are on a path of evolution. However, these competencies have not yet reached their full potential, presenting opportunities for further growth and enhancement.

4.2 The observed evolution of practices related to enhanced strategy formulation, role clarity, human resource management, and continuous improvement or innovation reflects a positive trend among university administrators. Despite this progress, the full optimization of institutional efficacy remains a work in progress, indicating a need for continued refinement and advancement.

4.3 The highly significant relationship established between the leadership competencies of university administrators and their institutional efficacy underscores the pivotal role these

competencies play in shaping the effectiveness and success of educational institutions. This connection reinforces the importance of ongoing professional development and growth for administrators to foster improved outcomes.

4.4 The identified challenges faced by educational administrators in this locale center around strategic management, leadership or fellowship skills, human personal skills, and technical expertise. These issues underline critical areas that require focused attention and targeted development efforts to address existing gaps and ensure a comprehensive approach to leadership.

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