

Importance of Leadership Strategies in Educational System

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Abstract: Education leadership is taken extremely seriously across the globe. While all the present initiatives for its development across the globe reflect local culture and needs, and vary in the balance of responsibility for such development between government, local authorities and academics, there remains similarity in the reasons for current interest, and in the content which educational leaders are believed to need to cover. This is indeed a critical time for education in general. It is an age of rapid and far-reaching changes, which no longer occur just at the local and national levels, but which have profound effects across the globe. The leader's context for an educational institution needs to be seen as global in nature in aims to untangle some of the issues and their effects, particularly with respect to the challenges they pose at the global level. This essay discusses in detail the basic concepts of leadership, describes the leadership qualities the head of the departments of the educational institutions should possess, explains the importance of leadership qualities for quality education and finally explores the challenges of imparting leadership strategies in educational institutions.

AN INTRODUCTION TO LEADERSHIP

Leadership has long intrigued humankind and has been the topic of extensive literature for centuries. The earliest writings include philosophies of leadership such as Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1531), and biographies of great leaders, with the development of the social science during the 20th century. Inquiry into leadership became prolific. Studies on leadership have emerged from every discipline "that has had some interest in the subject of leadership: anthropology, business administration, educational administration, history military science, nursing administration, organizational behavior, philosophy, political science, public administration, psychology, social and theology (Rost, 1991, p.45). As a result, there are many approaches to leadership not unlike fashion, approaches to leadership have evolved, changed focus and direction, and built upon one another during the past century. The following are the various approaches to leadership that have been followed from conventional times.

TRAIT APPROACH

The early trait approach theories were called "great man" theories because they focused on identifying the innate qualities and characteristics possessed by great social, political and military leaders such as Catherine the great, Mohandas, Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, Moses and Joan of Arc. Studies of leadership traits were especially strong from 1900 to the early 1940s and enjoyed renewed

emphasis beginning in the 1970s as researchers began to examine visionary and charismatic leadership. In the 1980s, researchers linked leadership to the "big five" personality factors while interested in emotional intelligence as a trait gained in the 1990s.

BEHAVIOR APPROACH

In the late 1930s, leaders research began to focus on behavior – what leaders do and how they act. Groundbreaking studies by researchers at the Ohio state university and the University of Michigan in the 1940s and 1950s analyzed how leaders acted in small group situations. Behavior approach theories hit their heyday in the early 1960s with Blake and Moutons' (1964) work exploring how managers use task behavior and relationship behavior in the organizational setting.

SITUATIONAL APPROACH

The premise of this approach is that different situations demand different kinds of leadership. Serious examination of situational approach theories began in the late 1960s by Hersey and Blanchard and Reddin. Situational approaches continued to be refined and revised from the 1970s through the 1990s (Vecchio, 1987). One of these, path-goal theory, examines how leaders use employee motivation to enhance performance and satisfaction. Another approach contingency theory focuses on the match between the leader's style and specific situational variables.

RELATIONAL APPROACH

In the 1990s, researches began examining the nature of relations between leaders and followers. This research ultimately evolved into Leader-Member-Exchange (LMX) theory. LMX theory predicts that high-quality relations generate more positive leader's outcomes than lower-quality relations research in the relational approach of leadership continues to generate moderate interest today

"NEW LEADERSHIP" APPROACH

When these approaches began appearing in the mid 1980s three decades ago – they were, and continue to be, called "new leadership" approaches (Bryman, 1992). Beginning in 1985 with the work of Bass and his associated, leadership studies generated visionary our charismatic leadership theories from these approaches developed transforming leadership theory, which describes leadership as a processes that changes people and organizations.

EMERGING LEADERSHIP APPROACHES

A diverse range of approaches to leadership are emerging during the 21st century. Currently, authentic leadership that looks at the authenticity of leaders and their leadership is enjoying strong interest. Similarly, the spiritual leadership approach examines how leaders use values, a sense of "calling" and membership to motivate followers. Servant leadership emphasizes the "caring principle" with leaders as "servants" who focus on their followers needs in order to help these followers become more autonomous knowledgeable, and like servants themselves. Gender based studies have gained much momentum as women continue to become more dominant in the workforce, especially on a global level. The shrinking of the world throughout has been illuminated through the study of cultural and global approaches to leadership. The historian timeline is not intended to represent these approaches as being separate and distinct eras, only to disappear from the picture when a new theory appears. Instead, many of these theories occur concurrently, building upon one another. Even when a certain approach period of popularity has wanted, the theory continues to influence further study and the development of new leadership approaches.

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES IN HEAD OF EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENTS

Leadership has an important place in all the disciplines. Education management is not an exception to it. Leadership for school improvement and student achievement depends on a clearly conceptualizes and

shared body of knowledge which, together with a set of educational values, guides and informs professional practice. Schools need more than leadership. They need a carefully convinced curriculum, quality instructional strategies, assessment strategies that guide planning, and school improvement efforts that continuously improve processes. But research and practical knowledge that continuously improve processes. But research and practical knowledge also point to the key importance of strong principal leadership than can effectively manage complex systems and lead instructional improvement. Over the past decade, research on school principals has retired their importance in promoting school effectiveness, restricting, school improvement, and the implementation of reform (Elmore and Burney, 1997; Fullan 1997). Principals are also central players in the implementation of comprehensive reform programs such as Accelerated Schools and the Comer Model. Good principals engage their schools in the core processes of establishing, maintaining, evaluating, and improving their structures and cultures. Schools need a principal to keep the organization going effectively and improving continuously. At times, reform groups have thought that schools could be manage and led by committees of empowered teachers; seldom have these approaches worked. In fact, one seldom fields an instructionally effective school without an effective principal. The importance of principals to school success makes it essential to examine the role more carefully in order to consider ways to improve the preparation and professional development of these leaders.

The foregoing description of the roles and responsibilities of the head of the department of an education institution suggests that the job is both complex and demanding. Various authors have put forward different attributes needed for success in the leadership. Keller (1998, p. 2) suggested that a good principal has the following qualities:

- Recognize teaching and learning as the main business of a school
- Communicates the school's mission clearly and consistently to staff members, parents, and students
- Fosters standards for teaching and learning that are high and attainable
- Provides clear goals and monitors the progress of students towards meeting them
- Spends time in classrooms and listens to teachers
- Promotes an atmosphere of trust and sharing
- Builds good staff and makes professional development a top concern

- Does not tolerate bad teachers

Further, the head of the departments in order to manage educational institutions properly have to adapt the following skills and attributes.

SKILLS

Leadership skills are grounded in educational values and professional knowledge. The skills of leadership for school and students improvement are exercised in relation to the leader function identified earlier. Skills may be grouped into the following three categories:

- **Personal:** these relate to how leaders manage their own behaviors and thoughts in their professional lives.
- **Communicative and influence:** these relate to how leaders interact at an interpersonal level with colleagues and other members of the community, and how they mobilize colleagues and other school community members sustained commitment to school improvement.
- **Organizational and technical:** these skills concern the tasks and techniques that are associated with running the whole school and securing improvement.

The key skills essential to running good schools and colleges are personal and interpersonal on the one side, and technical and task-oriented on the other. It is the achievement of high levels of both, and a balance between the two, that distinguishes effective leaders.

ATTRIBUTES

Educational values, professional knowledge, and skills are internal parts of leadership qualities. However, they are not sufficient. There is a fourth element, namely personal attributes that leaders bring to the role. In the context of school-based management and school improvement, certain attributes, in particular, seem to assume prime importance. The expert panel selected the following:

- **Adaptability and responsiveness** in school decision-making and in managing people while retaining commitment to core values, such as student needs and learning outcomes.
- **Courage of conviction** with regard to their values, principles and actions and resilience in times of adversity and opposition
- **Self confidence** in their abilities and actions, while maintaining modesty in their interactions and dealings with others in and outside their school communities

- **Tough-mindedness** in regard to the best interests of staff and students while showing benevolence and respect in all their interactions.

- **Collaboration** as team members coupled with individual resourcefulness and decisiveness.

IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP QUALITIES FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

Leaders of educational departments do several important things when creating. First, they read culture- its history and current condition. Leaders should know the deeper meanings embedded in the school before trying to reshape it. Second, leaders uncover and articulate core values, looking for those that reinforce what is best for students and that support student-centered learning. It is important to identify which aspects of the culture are negative and which are positive. Finally, leaders work to fashion a positive context, reinforcing cultural elements that are never monolithic or overly conforming, but core values and shared purposes should be pervasive and deep. Some of the specific ways schools leaders shape culture follows.

- They communicate core values in what they say and do
- They honor and recognize those who have worked to serve students and the purpose of the school
- They observe rituals and traditions to support the schools heart and soul
- They recognize heroes and heroines and the work these examples accomplish
- They eloquently speak of the deeper mission of the school
- They celebrate the accomplishments of the staff, the students, and the community.
- They preserve the focus us on students by recounting stories of success and achievement

CHALLENGES OF IMPARTING LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES IN SCHOOLS

John Hoyle (2007), an influential and visionary scholar in the area of leadership, has written about the fundamental importance of learning with love – defined as an unselfish concern and carrying for others good- as one leads with love is visioning, communicating, team working, empowering, mentoring, and evaluating. He sees caring for others as primary to the ability of organizations to reach

their potential. Hoyle (2006) believes that effective leaders must first become aware of and comfortable with their own spirit in order to reach the hearts and souls of their employees. Hoyle (2006) argues that one of the roles of leaders is trying to figure out what likely to happen in the future – or featuring, which requires creativity, passion for what they do vision, and persistence. Hoyle (2006) believes that the real task leaders is to transform top-down organizations “ruled” by authorities into bottom-up, empowered organizations that emphasis relationships. Future leaders must also nurture other feature leaders through the processes of

- Understanding the likelihood and possibility of different futures, and the opportunity to shape those futures;
- Enhancing flexibility in policy making and implementation;
- Broadening perspectives; and
- Encouraging creative thinking (about possible, plausible, probable, and preferred futures and their potential impacts)(Burton, 2003, p. 5)

In his discussions of leading change, Hoyle (2006) points out the collaborative, working groups that have trusting relationships and clear and inclusive communication networks can reduce the amount of pain in change by empowering others and sharing the job of leadership. In such a context, change occurs when individual share common beliefs, have quality information, strong professional development, and work together for a common cause.

STRATEGIES TO BE ADAPTED IN ORDER TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES

Scharmer (2007) argues that the world is in global crisis that can be defined by widening social, ecological, and cultural divides that separate individual, groups, and societies. To pass into future, leaders must move from a focus, albeit unconscious, on the past to an attention to the future through seven actions:

- Paying attention: beginning to open up
- Seeing: the view from outside
- Sensing: the view from within
- Presenting: the view from a surrounding presence
- Crystallizing visions and intend
- Prototyping living microcosms

- Performing and embodying the new (Scharmer, 2007, p.8)

Essential to leaders is the development of a coherent set of educational values on which to base leadership for school improvement (Blasé. J and Kirby. P.C). These values serve as fundamental principles on which to develop and design their schools and to provide consistently across all aspects of their leadership eight pivotal were identified:

- Learning-centered: a belief in the primacy of learning as the focus of all that happens in the school.
- Innovation: a belief in experimentation with new ideas and with change as a means of school improvement.
- Lifelong learning: a belief that a major goal of the school is to develop among its community a view of learning as a continuous and ongoing process.
- Education for all: a conviction that all students have a right to a relevant and meaningful education.
- Service –orientation: a belief that the school be flexible and responsive in meeting the diverse needs of its community.
- Empowerment: a commitment to the meaningful improvement involvement and participation of school community members in the life of the school.
- Equity and fairness: a belief that the rights of all in the school community are duly recognized and that individual are treated with justice and integrity.
- Whole person development: a commitment to producing and development of educational leaders to fully embraces these values. Yet to do so is axiomatic if leaders are to be successful school innovators and improvers.

CONCLUSION

A rich and flourishing society depends, in part, upon the provision for its citizens of a rich and diverse education and a rich and diverse education will only be achieved through the adoption and practice of a number of different educational objectives (Bulach. C.R, 2001). Education will continue to be major priority for enhancing political, social, and economic objectives for most people in and around the world. With this in mind, the challenges for today's educators and educational leaders are vast and therefore require a systematic approach to achieving a satisfactory solution. Educational leaders must become adept at

monitoring local, state, federal, and global environments in order to accurately forecast political and social problems that will impact their school or school system. It can be understood that the quality of education relates directly to the kind of work that leaders do, and that the head of the institutions play a vital role in improving the quality of educational institutions. Therefore it is essential for educational institutions to adapt effective leadership strategies by understanding and overcoming the challenges that stand as hindrance to imparting quality education in order to become globally competitive.

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