Educational Leadership for Managing Quality: Problems, Issues and Ethical Behavior

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Abstract
Educational leadership is the key to the success of educational organization. The purpose of this study was to identify the problems and issues faced by educational leader to manage the quality of higher educational institutions. The study also examined the ethical behavior of educational leaders. The study was qualitative in nature. The research was conducted on a sample of 20 heads (10 publics and 10 Private) departments and 20 employees (10 publics and 10 Private) were selected by using convenient sampling technique in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Semi-structured interview protocol was designed to inquire educational leaders' problems and issues regarding managing quality of higher education. The interview protocol was validated through expert opinion. For getting information about ethical behavior of the educational leaders from employees researcher conducted focused group discussion from 20 employees (10 Public and 10 Private). The collected data from semi-structured interviews and focused group discussion was then analyzed though descriptive coding technique. The study revealed that educational leaders were facing diversified problems such as: resource constraints and political pressure, the study also explored that educational leaders' were lacking in their ethical behavior, especially in private sector universities
Keywords: Educational Leaders, managing quality, ethical behavior.

1.0   Introduction

During the past decade, many countries such as British, Australia and New Zealand have taken various measures in order to define standards for teaching professional standards from key feature of their education system. The purpose of their introduction is to develop and maintain high quality teaching and leadership in ensuring that employer and management expectations are clear and consistent across each institution (Ministry of New Zealand, 1999). For the last decade in Malaysia, the Minister of Higher Education (MOHE) emphasized on the quality of higher education. MOHE has emphasized the research activities, curriculum development and faculty development.

Defining quality in higher education is a challenging task and there is, therefore, no universal consensus on how best to manage quality within higher education (Becket & Brookes, 2006). Quality can be viewed in terms of perfection, excellence, and value for money, fitness to purpose, or transformation (Harvey & Green, 1993). Perfection implies faultlessness for zero errors and is most relevant to the industry. Excellence implies the notion of reputation (Ashcroft & Forman, 1995) and refers to the traditional (often implicit) academic view which aims to demonstrate high academic standards (McKimm, 2003). Quality as value for money is about accountability (Biggs, 2003).

Frazer (1994) discussed that quality in higher education is important because universities must be accountable to society, employers, and students. Anderson (2006) has the opinion that the quality revolution in higher education has underscored the expectation that universities must demonstrate that they are providing quality education and producing quality research and constantly strive to improve both. Higher education is facing extraordinary challenges of quality assurance around the world universities (Strydom, Zulu & Murray, 2004).

The knowledge needed to improve our education system already exists within the education community. Quality management is a vehicle that education professionals can use to cope with the forces of change. Unfortunately, the attitude in many universities is that the quality of education will improve only when society provides education with more money. Money is not the key to improve the quality education. The quality of education will improve when administration, teaching staff universities and board members develop new attitude that focus on leadership, teamwork, co-operation, accountability and recognition (Arcaro, 2006).

In order to ensure the quality of education in Malaysia, a Malaysia education development plan was constituted by Minister of Education. First plan was constituted on 2011 and now the latest plan just reveals by Deputy Prime Minister as well as Minister of Education on November 2012 known as Malaysia Education Development Plan 2013 – 2025. Other than that the plan is always monitored by Malaysian Qualification Agencies (MQA).

Minister of Higher Education (MOHE) has constituted Malaysian Qualification Agencies (MQA) with a mission to arrange the capacity building training/seminars and workshops in order to enable the higher education institutions of Malaysia to meet the challenges of quality assurance in higher learning. Under the auspicious of Quality Assurance Agency, in first phase, MOHE has established Quality Enhancement Cells (QEC) in several public sector universities of Malaysia. In Phase II for the year 2012, MOHE has planned

quality enhancement cells in 20 other universities of Malaysia in order to monitor and improve the quality of higher education. These quality assurance cells have been given a mandate to introduce quality assurance procedures in universities. By analyzing the progress, work and difficulties faced by quality enhancement cells in different universities, Azam (2007) suggested that the mechanism of quality assurance should be introduced slowly and gradually in public and private universities of Malaysia in order to get full benefits of this program.

Many of the Quality Assurance Agencies have standard functioning across the world in the recent decades. A few of the strong network for quality assurance such as Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) and International Network of Quality Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)) are also active in establishing a harmony and uniformity across borders. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) acquired earned membership for these Quality Assurance (QA) network for knowledge and resource sharing on the subject and to promote quality culture in the country compatibility to international practices in the field of higher education (Batool & Qureshi, 2006).

Problems of higher education in Malaysia are complicated to some extent. There are two main factors that are to be first documented and to be dealt with. The first is the increasing demand for higher education and proportionately fewer facilities available in public universities. The second factor relates to the low standard of the faculty especially in public universities. The remedies are yet to be discovered (Abdullah, 1992).

Alan, et. al.(2005) found that the quality of postgraduate study is not purely a question of supervision methodology and motivation but hinges also, but not exclusively, on institutional admission procedures and policies, faculty/school administration policies as well as assistance and infrastructure that is provided by faculty/school to supervisors and students, including financial assistance, access to child care, pastoral care, computing, library, office space, phone access, access to secretarial support, provision of research seminars and presentations, funding for library searches, conferences, travel, fieldwork, photocopying, and opportunities for casual work within the school.

Leadership is the process of influencing a group towards achievement of goals is called leadership. However, not all leaders necessarily have the capabilities or skills of effective managers and, thus, not all leaders should be managers. The fact that an individual can influence others, does not tell whether or not he or she can also plan, organize and control (Stephen & Marry, 2002).

Men and women are supposed to conduct themselves with utmost dignity in the place they work. How we behave in our workplace goes a long, long way in building a rock solid reputation, praises and accolades in the years to come. Ways to conduct ourselves morally and ethically on our workplace.

Don't Gossip-Malicious gossip is one of the most destructive behaviors in the workplace. Don't gossip about people in top and higher levels of management as this gets carried to them. Avoid using office stationery for personal use, Avoid using office equipment for personal use, Be committed to work, Work Every day, Don't Procrastinate: – Some people like to put off work until the next day not realizing that work piles up, Be Focused, Don't Interfere, and Be Polite.

'Ethical Behavior in the Workplace' should be followed by every individual striving for personal and professional excellence as this leads to personal satisfaction and self-esteem and respect from other professionals in the workplace.

Ethics is a philosophical term derived from the Greek word "ethos" meaning character or custom. This definition is germane to effective leadership in organizations in that it connotes an organization code conveying moral integrity and consistent values in service to the public. Certain organizations will commit themselves to a philosophy in a formal pronouncement of a Code of Ethics or Standards of Conduct. Having done so, the recorded idealism is distributed or shelved, and all too often that is that. Other organizations, however, will be concerned with aspects of ethics of greater specificity, usefulness, and consistency. Ethical behavior is that which is morally accepted as "good" and "right" as opposed to "bad" or "wrong" in a particular setting.

Leadership plays an important role in managing quality of higher education. Educational leadership gives us vision to cope with the current situations and to reach the international standards of higher education. Researches show that there is strong relationship between leadership role and quality of higher education. In Malaysia context the ethical behavior of leaders really matters for the quality of teaching learning process. If teachers are not being treated with ethics they will be mentally disturbed and cannot work properly.

In Malaysia, like other countries, higher education plays a vital role in the socio-economic development and political awareness of the country. There are 20 universities in the public sector, 3 premiere polytechnic, more than 10 polytechnic, and several skills training institute. Otherwise, there are many private sector universities and also several branches of international universities like Monash University and Cambridge University.

There is no single Malaysian university in the top 100 universities of the world. Why it is so? We are lacking in many things which will lead our universities in the top ranking universities of the world especially in quality of higher education. This is for sure; if we want to improve the quality of higher education we have to solve the problems and issues of educational leaders of higher education. This study is focusing on the problems and issues of educational leaders to manage the quality of higher education, so that effective measures should be

taken to improve their working conditions to improve their quality management of higher education.

1.1   Objective of the study
         In the light of the significance of quality of higher education, the study is aimed at following objectives.
- To identify the problems faced by educational leaders to manage the quality of higher education at university level
- To explore issues faced by educational leaders to manages the quality of higher education at university level
- To explore the ethical behavior of educational leaders with the employees in order to manage the quality of higher education
- To suggest viable measures to overcome problems and Issues faced by educational leaders to manage the quality of higher Education at university level.

1.2   Research questions of the study
1. What are the problems faced by educational leaders to manage the quality of higher education at university level?
2. What are the issues faced by educational leaders to manages the quality of higher education at university level?
3. What is ethical behavior of educational leaders towards their subordinates?
4. What are the viable measures, in the opinion of educational leaders, to overcome problems and Issues to manage the quality of higher Education at university level?

2.0   Methodology
         The study was qualitative in nature. The research was conducted on a sample of 20 heads departments of the public and private universities and 20 employees were selected by using convenient sampling technique in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. For data collection, semi-structured interview was developed as a research instrument. Semi-structured interview was designed to inquire educational leaders' problems and issues regarding managing quality of higher education. The interview protocol was validated through expert opinion. The interview protocol was based on three core questions.
1. What are the problems you are facing as an educational leader to manage the quality of higher education?
2. What are the issues you are coping with regarding managing quality in higher education?
3. What you suggest in order to overcome these problems and Issues to manage the quality of higher Education?

For getting information about ethical behavior of the educational leaders from employees researcher conducted focused group discussion from 20 employees. The collected data from semi-structured interviews and focused group discussion was done though descriptive coding technique.

3.0   Findings
         Researcher found the problem and issues faced by educational leaders. The heads are facing diversified problems such as lack of resources as financial, centralization, lack of teaching and administrative staff, lack of commitment and cooperation by faculty members, lack of university culture in new universities, lack of uniform criteria for appointment / selection, lack of physical resources such as shortage of rooms, labs, equipments, power supplies, latest books and journals, political pressure, time constraints due to overburden of management assignments of the university.

    Researcher also found that heads of Department of Quality Development were facing complex issues such as the unclear rules and regulations of the universities, contractual staff on key posts, faith of people on discretions and not on systems, lack of authority of educational leaders, centralization

    Finally, researcher found that the ethical behavior of educational leaders. The leaders do gender discrimination. The subordinates of the views that leaders are lacking in self respect for the sub-ordinates. They tell that leaders show biasness with the subordinates. They were of the view that there is no issue of harassment from the heads.

4.0   Conclusion and Recommendations
         In view of the aforesaid results, following recommendations can be put forwarded to improve the working of educational leaders to improve the quality of higher education:
i.   There should be more funds from MOHE, provincial government and respected university, to overcome the weaknesses of the departments such as infrastructure, labs, and new books to manage the quality of higher education
ii.   Heads of departments should monthly review the course taught by the faculty, number of assignments, quizzes conducted, and achievement of outcomes.
iii. There should be increase in physical resources as building and IT resources.

iv.   There should be proper facilitation from the university to the respected departments heads for better teaching learning process
v.   Sufficient autonomy should be given to the heads.
vi.   There should be appropriate number of working staff for the university to overcome the burden regarding teaching and management
vii.   Political leaders should not involved in the matters of the university
viii. There should be permanent hiring of staff for teaching and administrative positions
ix.   There should be proper training of heads to deal ethically with the subordinates

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