The Practice Of Transformational Leadership In Ethiopian Private Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

In the past, the emphasis was more on the leader as "boss." Today, leaders must be partners with their people; they can no longer lead with positional power alone. The objective of the study was to assess the practices of transformational leadership in Ethiopian private Higher Education Institutions. Descriptive survey was used as research design. A total of 281 respondents were considered by using stratified sampling techniques for this study. To collect relevant and reliable data from the selected sample respondents, both open and closed ended questionnaires were prepared and administered. Descriptive statistics specifically mean and standard deviation was for the purpose of data analysis. The finding of the study shows that most of the leaders at private higher education Institutions were not influential leaders as they are not trusted by staffs, unable to show high ethical standard and they were not strong role model as indicated by lowest mean value of (1.71). Moreover, of private higher education institutions lacks qualities like articulating clear vision, motivating team spirit and making effective communications as indicated by lowest mean value of (1.94).The individual consideration part of transformational leadership style (listening carefully to others and not being intolerant of opposing viewpoints) was also low with the lowest a mean score of (1.54) implying that the leaders' engagements in this leadership practice were relatively low and they were not good at using potentials everywhere in their organization . The result also shows that those leaders in the private higher institutions in the study had not able to provide tasks that are stretching and achievable but focus on routines as they fear risk to try new things.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, leadership, organization

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Introduction

In today's dynamic and changing environment and on the current situation, modern leadership style has vital role, for the development of country, nation as well as organizations. According to Oduro (2008) a skilled leader plays significant role towards the success of organization. On one hand, more failures of organization are attributable to poor leadership other than any cause. Poor leadership can nullify the soundest organization. It is the quality of leadership, which usually determines the fate of an organization. The leader is the agent who helps to smooth the pathway towards goal accomplishment. There is no substitute for effective leadership (Oduro, 2008).

In another interrelated study made by Mazurkiewicz (2011) contend that the stated that the leader's role has shifted dramatically in recent years. In the past, the emphasis was more on the leader as "boss." Today, leaders must be partners with their people; they can no longer lead with positional power alone. Leaders must move from the "command-and-control" role of judging and evaluating to a role of ensuring accountability through supporting, coaching, and cheerleading. In similar vein, Tesfaw (2014) also say that organizational leadership does not mean having a boss thinking of a command and then watch as it is filtered throughout the rank. Organizational leadership, instead, is the ability of management to understand its employees and company's goals enough to bring everyone together (Tesfaw, 2014).

In parallel view, leadership has certain advantages notably for bureaucratic systems, but there are difficulties in applying it too enthusiastically to schools and colleges because of the professional role of trainers. If trainers do

not owninnovations but are simply required to implement externally imposed changes they are likely to do so without enthusiasm, leading to possible failure (Bush, 2007). While department chairs are expected to lead train and training within this multifaceted environment, the leadership preparation programs in university typically include generic leadership skills and do not focus on issues of leadership for learning. Bennis (2003) pointed out, leadership in higher education is the capacity to infuse new values and goals into the organization, to provide perspective on events and environments which, if unnoticed, can impose constraints on the institution. Leadership in higher education involves planning, auditing, communicating, relating to outside constituencies, insisting on the highest quality of performance and people, keeping an eye out for forces which may lead to or disable important reforms.

Problem statement

In spite of the recognition of the importance of leadership for effective implementation of educational reform, studies of educational leadership within African context indicate that leaders of educational institutions remained unlocked in a constricting bureaucracy even as there was demand that they be proactive and decisive in their leadership role (Brown & Conrad, 2007).

Moreover, leaders are highly engaged in mobilizing the existing human resource. Thus, effective leadership practice enables greater participation of entire work force, and can positively influence both individuals and organizational performance. Therefore, it is logical to say that the success of an organization is dependent on the leader's ability optimize human resources inherent potential and skills. In addition, employees are the ones who play the major roles and make significant contributions to the development of the organization.

Therefore, the leaders of organization should pay much attention to their employees in order to keep them in the organization, and influence them to increase their efficiency so that they eventually lead to greater achievements of organizational visions and long-term goals. In leadership practices, leaders confront with several challenges in the day-to-day operation, but the question is how leaders resolve this challenge or change in to opportunity.

In view of such an issue, transformational leadership plays a significant role directly or indirectly in influencing its followers by promoting and managing school development. There has been empirical evidence that indicate a link between transformational leadership of the educational institutions and student ability to succeed academically (Leithwood&Jantzi, 2007; Leithwood et al. 2004). Though, no previous study has been conducted within Ethiopia to examine the relationship between the transformational leadership of school principals and school effectiveness particularly taking in to consider the measurement of school effectiveness, worldwide there are so many evidences that transformational leadership style improve effectiveness.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to assess the practices of transformational leadership in Ethiopian Higher private education.

Specifically,

- To describe basic practices related to transformation leadership style in Ethiopian PHEIs
- To identify the most and the least observable practices related to transformational leadership

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Approach and Design

The researcher used quantitative research approach. The quantitative approach helps to quantify or objectively measure certain variables in numeric terms, which makes descriptive analysis easy and manageable. Descriptive survey design was used as research design together with quantitative approach.

Data Sources and Types

Bothprimaryandsecondarydatawillbecollectedfromrelevantsourcesthathelpto achieve the above objectives. The primary sources of information were collected from private higher institutions teachers through questionnaire and interview. On the other hand, the secondary sources mostly include: books, articles, journals, research works, internet browsing, etc. that will have relevance with the research topic.

Target Population of the Study

Target population is a total group of people from whom the researcher so obtain information to

meet the research objectives. Therefore, the target populations of the current study were 948 drawn from five private higher institutions in Ethiopia.

Table 1: Distribution ofinstructors in private higher institutions

Name of the institutions	Population
Rift Valley University	260
Saint Merry University	180
Unity University	220
Alpha University College	132
New Generation University College	156
Total	948

Source: MOE 2019 report

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Accordingly, the representative sample size was determined by using the formula developed by Yamane (1967) as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n=Sample size
N = Total Population
E = Sampling Error

Based on this formula, the total sample size of the study is determined as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{948}{1 + 948(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{948}{1 + 948(0.0025)}$$

$$n = 281$$

Therefore, 281 instructors was taken as the total sample size of the study. In order to select the individual respondents, a proportional stratified sampling technique employed.

Sampled Instructors and name of institutions

Name of the institutions	Population	Sample
Rift Valley University	260	77
Saint Merry University	180	53
Unity University	220	65
Alpha University College	132	39
New Generation University College	156	47
Total	948	281

Source: Own computation, 2021

Data Collection Tools

Questionnaires were used as data collection tools.

Questionnaire

To collect relevant and reliable data from the selected sample respondents, both open and closed ended questionnaire were prepared and administered. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data from selected respondents. It was prepared in English language and translated into the local language (Amharic) in order to make the questions clear, avoid ambiguity as well as to be easily understood by the respondents. The questionnaire includes Likert scale questions with five-point ratings. The questionnaire was edited by the English language teachers to check the equivalency of translation to the Amharic meaning. The data collection process was managed by the researcher.

Reliability Test

Reliability test is the degree to which the measure of a construct is consistent or dependable. It is a measure of consistency between different items of the same construct. If a multiple item construct measure is administered to respondents, the extent to which respondent rate those items in a similar manner is a reflection of internal consistency. This reliability can be estimated in terms of Cronbach's alpha (Bhattacharjee, 2012). According to George and Mallery (2003), reliability score of greater than 0.9 is excellent, greater than 0.8 is good, greater than 0.7 is acceptable, greater than 0.6 is questionable, greater than 0.5 is poor and less than 0.5 is unacceptable. In this research Cronbach's alpha model was used with five-point Likert scales. Reliability was checked and its value was 0.87.

Validity Test

Validity refers to the extent to which a measure adequately represents the underlying construct habits equal supposed to measure (Bhatteheriee,

2012). Content validity was checked by getting a comment from major advisor and co-advisors.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data which will be collected questionnaire was cleaned, coded, entered, edited and analyzed using SPSS software version 21. Descriptive statistical analysis such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation was used for the purpose of data analysis.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

Practice of transformational leadership

Table 1. Idealized Influence

Idealized Influence	Mean	SD
Shows strong role model	2.50	0.664
Deeply respected, admired, and trusted by staff	1.71	0.533
Can be counted on to the right thing	1.74	0.494
Demonstrates high standard of ethical and moral conduct	2.55	0.543
Provides the staff with a collective sense of mission	2.51	0.432
Displays the most important institutional beliefs and valves	1.91	0.547

As indicated in the previous table, the six idealized influence practices were analyzed using mean and standard deviation scores. The means and corresponding standard deviations of the sample respondents show that the six practices of idealized influence implying that the leaders' engagements in this leadership practices were relatively low and specifically mean result of each practice was less than 2.60 It shows that leaders in the private higher institutions in the study area have been not able to focus on this practice idealized influence as one basic practice of transformational leadership. The idealized influence element of transformational leadership clearly says that leader can influence followers only when he practices what he preaches (Bass, Avolio, Berson, Jung, 2003). The leaders act as role models that followers seek to emulate. Such leaders always win the trust and respect of their followers through their action. They typically place their followers needs over their own, sacrifice their personal gains for them, ad demonstrate high standards of ethical conduct. The use of power by such leaders is aimed at influencing them to strive for the common goals of the organization. But, what the research data indicate above is the opposite as leaders of PHEIs were not practicing what they preach.

Table 2. Inspirational Motivation

	Mean	SD
Articulates a clear and attractive vision of future	2.69	0.396
Expresses confidence, decisiveness and optimism about the vision and its implementation	2.54	0.634
Achieves their vision properly	1.99	0.676
Sets an enviable examples others to follow	1.95	0.540
Demonstrates high personal standards	1.94	0.564
Motivates the team spirit	1.98	0.956
Facilitates effective communication among staff	2.23	0.655

As indicated in the previous table, the seven inspirational motivation practices were analyzed using mean and standard deviation scores. The mean and corresponding standard deviations of the sample respondents (Articulate a clear and attractive vision) show that the inspirational motivation practice was with a mean score 2.69 and the corresponding standard deviation of 0.396, implying that the leaders' engagements in this leadership practice were low.

According to Rowald and Rohmam (2009), Inspirational motivation as the foundation of transformational leadership is the promotion of consistent vision, mission, and a set of values to the members. Their vision is so compelling that they know what they want from every interaction. Transformational leaders guide followers by providing them with a sense of meaning and challenge. They work enthusiastically and optimistically to foster the spirit of teamwork and commitment. In the current as the data show, even though some of the elements under this category is positive, most the other elements are indicated by low mean value. The implication is that most of the leaders in PHEIs weak in to fostering the spirit of teamwork and commitment to accomplish their vision and mission.

Table 3. Individual consideration

Individual consideration	Mean	SD
Treats staff as unique individuals	2.59	0.376
Tries to understand the other person's view points	2.33	0.634
Listens carefully to others and not intolerant of opposing view points	2.79	0.675
Recognizes the different capabilities of individuals	1.77	0.444
Changes his/her style and approach according to who is dealing with	1.54	0.564
Takes time as a mentor of coach to the teachers	1.56	0.784
Establishes a climate of trust and fosters co-operative relationship with immediate colleagues	2.57	0.456
Helps teachers develop their own leadership potential	1.23	0.543
Delegates tasks and monitors the delegated tasks to determine the followers need additional direction or support to assess progress	1.65	0.635

As indicated in the previous table, the nine individual consideration practices were

analyzed using mean and standard deviation scores. The means and corresponding standard deviations of the sample respondents show that the third individual consideration practice (listening carefully to others and not being intolerant of opposing viewpoints) was indicated by a mean score of 2.79 and the corresponding standard deviation of 0.675, implying that the leaders' engagements in this leadership practice were relatively low. It shows that leaders in the private higher institutions in the study area have not been able to listen carefully to others and are not intolerant of opposing viewpoint.

Individualized consideration is the most important part of transformational leadership as Leaders act as mentors to their followers and reward them for creativity and innovation (Choi, Adam and Tan, 2016). The followers are treated differently according to their talents and knowledge. They are empowered to make decisions and are always provided with the needed support to implement their decisions. The common examples of transformational leaders are Mahatma Gandhi and Obama. But, the current research shows that the PHEIs leaders are so weak in treating their employees differently according to their talents and knowledge.

Table 4. Intellectual stimulation

Intellectual stimulation	Mean	SD
Asks questions to test other's thinking	1.66	0.396
Critically re-examines assumption to questions	2.64	0.231
Encourages other to challenge the status quo	2.54	0.765
Seeks different ideas from staff when solving problems	1.67	0.223
Shows ability to sell the benefit of new ideas	1.65	0.564
Provides tasks that are stretching but achievable	3.23	0.324
Helps individuals to look problems to different angles	1.23	0.223
Encourages staff to work to their best potential	1.54	1.011

As indicated in the previous table, the eight intellectual stimulation practices were analyzed using mean and standard deviation scores. The means and corresponding standard deviations of the sample respondents show that the sixth intellectual stimulation practice (provides tasks that are stretching but achievable) was low with a mean score of 3.23 and the corresponding standard deviation of 0.324, implying that the leaders' engagements in this leadership practice were relatively low.

It shows that leaders in the private higher institutions in the study area have not able to provide tasks that are stretching but achievable focus on routines.

According to Bass and Riggio (2006), in transformational leadership style, leaders encourage their followers to be innovative and creative. The so called intellectual stimulation. They encourage new ideas from their followers and never criticize them publicly for the mistakes committed by them. The leaders focus on the "what" in problems and do not focus on the blaming part of it. They have no hesitation in discarding an old practice set by them if it is found ineffective. But, the current study comes up with the finding that leaders at PHEIs are not strong enough in encouraging new ideas and they are not risk taking type of leaders.

Conclusion

In today's dynamic and changing environment and on the current situation, modern leadership style has vital role, for the development of country, nation as well as organizations. According to Oduro (2008) a skilled leader plays significant role towards the success of organization

The idealized influence element of trans-formational leadership clearly says that leader can influence followers only when he practices what he preaches (Bass, Avolio, Berson, Jung, 2003). It shows that leaders in the private higher institutions in the study area have not been able to listen carefully to others and are not intolerant of opposing viewpoints.

The study also shows that leaders in the private higher institutions in the study area are strong enough in engaging themselves in inspirational and motivating others.

It shows that leaders in the private higher institutions in the study area have not been able to provide tasks that are stretching and achievable but they focus on routines.

Individualized consideration is the most important part of transformational leadership as Leaders act as mentors to their followers and reward them for creativity and innovation (Choi, Adam and Tan, 2016). But, the result of the study shows that the leaders' engagements in this leadership practice were relatively low.

Recommendation

- Leaders must expresses confidence, decisiveness and optimism about the vision and its implementation
- Demonstrates high standard of ethical and moral conduct and must work in the way they are respected and trusted by followers
- Leaders must help individuals in the organization to look problems to different angles and encourages staff to work to their best potential
- Leaders must establishes a climate of trust and fosters co-operative relationship with immediate colleagues
- Leaders must encourages other to challenge the status quo and innovative

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