

LEADERSHIP SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP TO IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: Thai higher education is facing difficulties and challenges to perform effectively. Leadership skills among university leaders are a barrier to improve the organizational effectiveness. This research was guided by theoretical frameworks that were most relevant to leadership skills and organizational effectiveness. This research focused on finding the most appropriate leadership skills for top executives in higher education institutions that affect the organization effectiveness by using Public Sector Management Award (PMQA) as an assessment model. The results showed 10 leadership skills that affect the organizational effectiveness including: inspiring the shared vision; challenging staff in establishing a set of goals to implement the shared vision; crafting the initiative with staff to achieve goals; enabling staff to implement the plan; providing budget and allocating resources to support the plan; coaching (encouraging the heart) the leadership teams; modeling key processes to manage change and solve problems; constructing collaborative network (facilitating) among all stakeholders; maintaining performance expectations; and recognizing and rewarding staff.

Introduction

Komolmas (1999) emphasized that Thailand is facing difficulties and challenges to educational leadership for managing scarce resources with efficiency and effectiveness. Michael (1995); Prangpatanpon (1996); Pounder (1999) Boonprasert, Tantanadecha, Polsarum, and Yeager (2008), identified similar challenges of the situation of Thai higher education and other higher education institutions worldwide. Over the past two decades, these institutions have come under pressure to perform effectively and face the difficulty to meet the requirements of the changing society.

The systems of quality assurance such as Public Sector Management Award (PMQA) made it necessary for higher education institutions to adjust their leadership and to systematically manage by using the designed practices in order to gain more efficiency. Nevertheless, as cited by Robert (2003), adopting these designed practices to the academic world alone did not help because unqualified educational leaders who lacked appropriate leadership skills had an impact on poor effectiveness. Longenecker and Fink (2005); Vitásková A. and Jukl, J. (2005); and Preedeedilok, K. (2007), furthermore, agreed that the serious lack of leadership

skills among university leaders was a barrier to improve the organizational effectiveness.

Therefore, to overcome the pressure of higher educational leadership for improving organizational effectiveness, the development of leadership skills for educational leaders which directly affected the organizational effectiveness in higher education was needed to guide top management of higher education institutions in enhancing their leadership skills.

Objectives and Scope of the Study

Research objectives were to explore the possible leadership skills of the effective leaders in high performance higher education institutions and to identify major components, to assess actual performance of leadership skills, to assess the organizational effectiveness, and to determine the relationship between major components and organizational effectiveness.

Higher education executive administrators, including: chairman, vice chairman, member of the university council, president, vice president, assistant to the president, dean, vice dean, and director, who worked at Khon Kaen University were assessed.

Literature Review

This research was guided by theoretical frameworks that were most relevant to leadership skills and organizational effectiveness.

Leadership Skills:

Leadership skills have been universally recognized as a key ingredient (Adair & Adair, 2007). According to Owen (2007), leadership skills are tacit skills: know-how more than knows-what. They need to be learned, not taught. In this research, leadership skills are the skills to drive the process of persuading and motivating others to achieve shared goals together.

Level of Skills Required for Typical Leadership and Managerial Positions

Smith (2003) showed that as an individual climbed the organization's hierarchical ladder, moving from first line supervisor to middle manager, onto administrator to organizational executive, differing levels of leadership skills and managerial skills were required at each new level. Some levels required more leadership skills; others required more managerial skills. According to the scope of this study, the research aimed to study only at the top executive level that developed the organization's vision and passed it onto the administrators to develop organizational policies which would achieve that vision. At this level, communication, motivation, and problem-solving were the skills most required for executives (Smith, 2003).

Review of Leadership Skills since 1985

Leadership Development National Excellence Collaborative (2001) searched several databases reviewing leadership skills on collaborative leadership. This search covered 1985 to the present. The research also tracked in

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