



Leadership, Professional Development and Higher Education Institutions: A Study of Constituent Campuses of Tribhuvan University

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Abstract

This article aims to explore the aspects of leadership at constituent campuses run under Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu Valley. For this, only five constituent campuses have been selected purposefully to analyze the factors of leadership, where selected participants using purposive sampling have been designated in accordance with their perspectives and personal experiences. In-depth interviews were developed to collect information from participants to comprehend their viewpoints about leadership and the working ability of different campuses. Throughout the interviews, we tried to comprehend the respondents' explanations, experiences, observations, and evidence about leadership. The discussion was coded to generate themes in light of the key concepts of transformative leadership theory in order to reach a conclusion. The findings showed that effective leadership is influenced by a variety of factors, including the degree of interaction, problem-solving skills, collaboration, and decision-making capacity to develop the campuses academically, financially, and administratively. Leadership is detrimental to professional development, and the qualities of campuses are positively impacted by regular communication between faculty, staff, and stakeholders. The leadership was inspired to enhance organizational capacity and collaboration by the deft problem-solving skills of the lead instructor. The transformative leadership gives priority and sets values for the improvement of educational quality is the main aspect of this paper. The leadership has to be made more aware of this to achieve the goals of higher education in the twenty-first century, which are essential to upholding a high standard of cooperation while upholding the principles of efficient communication and teamwork.

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Keywords: Communication, higher education, transformation, leadership, professional development

Introduction

Over the period of Nepali higher education and the extensive leadership effectiveness, the challenges and opportunities in constituent campuses are significant to improve the quality of education of Tribhuvan University (TU). TU has encountered the same range of situations in its excursion, including bulging in and bulging out. Black (2015) states that the leadership of higher education institutions has come under growing scrutiny since the 1980s, as the number of students has expanded, funding for students has changed, marketization and student choice have grown, and the industry has continued to become more globalized. The higher education sector has undergone a number of contextual changes in recent decades, including increased cross-border academic mobility, the development of for-profit private institutions, the globalization of the market and internationalization of institutions, and reductions in public funding (Gibbons, 1998; Middlehurst, 1999; Schofer and Meyer, 2005; Bryman, 2007; Bennis, 2009; Black *et al.*, 2013). Due to the need to adjust to a significant increase number of students' enrollment, the emergence of a leadership style is a necessary factor since 1990 in Nepal, and its higher education institutions have come under increased scrutiny. The expectation of transformative leadership is more outward-facing, student-focused approach that is largely at odds with the traditional inward-looking collegial approach.

For this, a variety of issues of leadership should focus on higher education system to

improve the learning environment at TU. In this case, the factors of transformative leadership and its actions about organizational improvement, leadership, and management are momentous. Based on these observations, this paper has discovered that the diversity of leadership has an impact on all aspects of the quality improvement of institutions, focusing on leadership capacity, coordination with the faculty and staff, communication ability established with the students, etc. The observation of the activities in the constituent campuses, and discussion with the major stakeholders from academic, financial, and administrative perspectives are the parts of this paper. Bagale (2021) states that the transformative leadership is an important constituent for improvement of institutions and requires a long-term perspective and vision-based participation in policy formulation. Scholars' writings on university leadership come from a variety of academic departments and disciplines which would be a significant impact on the theory and practice of it only. Macfarlane *et al.* (2024) express that academic leadership in higher education is complicated, which reflects the fragmented nature of higher education courses. Quality management, performance indicators, task allocation methods, and transformational leadership have all been introduced into contemporary universities. In the case of Nepal, they have been part of the education sector. An additional layer of complication arises from the fact that individuals who write and research on university leadership and management may not consider themselves authorities

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in the field; instead, they may identify as historians, social philosophers, political sociologists, policy sociologists, gender and equity specialists, or historians. It should come as no surprise that Bryman and Lilley (2009) highlight how leadership concentrates on the academic sector to guarantee the caliber of higher education.

Tribhuvan University, as an institution for higher education in Nepal, is important for the development of Nepal. Its quality improvement is important for students' academic as well as professional development, progress, and contentment in order to meet the task of upholding the institution's goals. Afshari *et al.* (2012) believe that leadership in higher education is the process of inspiring and managing faculty and personnel to work assiduously toward the educational objective. The development and growth of the academic sector are significantly influenced by transformative leadership (Askling and Stensaker, 2002; Denney, 2020; Gallos and Bolman, 2021). Effective school leadership may provide helpful recommendations and constructive criticism to help the school go on the correct path because of its greater impact on the attainment of educational objectives. As stated in Sehar and Alwi (2010), in Nepal, the legal and systemic frameworks do not govern leadership activities.

The management aspects and decision-making process are endangered by a number of variables. The institutional demands of today and reality make administrative actions and leadership styles dysfunctional. Under such circumstances, institutions operate without a mission or vision, and as a result, objective performance falls short

of expectations (Alvunger, 2015; Liu *et al.*, 2020; Wald and Golding, 2020; Kennie and Middlehurst, 2021; Sumara, 2021). Research is needed to better understand the aspects that influence successful leadership and improve learning outcomes. Thus, this study is limited in what it can investigate about the variables influencing campus leadership. The scope of the study is limited to analyzing the environment and circumstances surrounding leadership practices on community campuses in Kathmandu Valley. Therefore, it helps to develop a meaningful leadership style that guides the TU to improve learning and academic outcomes and provide a safe atmosphere in order to meet organizational goals. The study presented here had the aim of exploring the factors that influence effective leadership in constituent campuses for improving the quality education.

Literature Review

Some leaders are culturally influenced, and some of them are too traditional. For this, traditional and conventional leadership believe in the cultural practice of leadership. The pragmatic leadership gives priority to what skills and competencies the leaders need, and the transformative leadership wants to bring about changes in higher education. It gives priority to how the values and needs of society shape the leadership for educational quality and transformation, which is the main aspect of this paper. In addition to developing their leadership essence, leaders must enhance their personalities and self-development through experience. leading competency, goal-achievement vision, inspiration, and empowerment to overcome obstacles are the main actions

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of leadership (Tuytens and Devos, 2010; Armstrong & Woloshyn, 2017; Balyer and Özcan, 2017, Arday, 2018).

One quality of a leadership may drive the campuses to new heights of academic, financial, and administrative development with outstanding creativity is transformational leadership. It sets four major goals, and it observes leadership as a happening that is constructed, contextual/relational, emergent, and paradoxical (Montuori 2010). Montuori and Donnelly (2018) state that transformative leaders (1) review the past, (2) question and recognize the present, (3) envision alternatives and possibilities, and (4) embody and enact the future. The leader leads, encourages, inspires and motivates employees to make meaningful changes within academic institutions. The leader provides a productive learning atmosphere that motivates faculty and students to move the institution forward. According to Yang (2013), transformative leadership addresses practical problems through cooperation and partnership and affirms the vision for the development of institutions. It explores how leadership understands the world from a dynamic and changing perspective. What the leadership does to solve the problems contributes to making the institution better.

Leadership has the ability to lead, and our conduct as leaders is mirrored in all of our contacts, actions, and discussions with others, as the fundamental principles of transformational leadership. It is asked to think about the kind of world they are creating through their connections, thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors and to compare it to the kind of world and person they aspire to be. Montuori and Donnelly

(2017) view transformative leadership as essentially about including others in a creative and cooperative process of transformation that is advantageous to both sides. It is not connected to heroic figures doing ostentatious and dramatic actions. It includes little actions, realizing their cumulative influence, and the potential for a butterfly effect. Small actions, words, or even careless, casual comments can have a big impact on a close relationship or major business (Mahdinezhad et al., 2018; McCaffery, 2018). The real circumstances of the stakeholders, and discovering a solution are the foundations of this kind of leadership. Creating a common vision, coming up with fresh concepts, acquiring credibility, delegating authority, and experiencing success are some of the elements of transformational leadership that are used in higher education.

Transformative leaders set high standards, have clear objectives, inspire others, give support and acknowledgement, and serve as role models for honesty and justice. Individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and an inspirational leader who inspires and uplifts each follower to a new degree of concern about their own human condition—and occasionally the condition of humanity as a whole—are components of transformational leadership (Yang, 2013).

The capacity to envision new social genuineness and effectively convey it to others is transformative leadership. Every organization has a single, permanent head. The number of senior followers, the layer of followers below them, etc., stay, depending on the size of the organization. The goal of transformational leadership is to increase organizational profit. The quality of interactions and relationships

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within an organization is the main emphasis of transformative leadership. It is crucial to identify effective leadership as certain abilities and characteristics of a school leader (Tuytens & Devos, 2010; Thompson & Miller, 2018). An activist agenda and a proactive commitment to social justice, equality, and a democratic society are traits of transformative leadership. Recognizing that society is socially created, some members of the organization display more authority than others

Research Methods

The researcher must be the main tool of inquiry for the study, wherein the researcher's experiences, presumptions, and prejudices are acknowledged (Schulz & Rubel, 2011; Adebisi & Abayomi, 2016). The researcher's presumptions and biases include the number of the campuses, the degree of decision-making, the leaders' personalities, the ability to solve problems, and teamwork all affect the leadership. The researcher has the extensive experience of teaching at community and constituent campuses of TU. Now, the researcher is currently involved in teaching at the constituent campus only. Here, a qualitative method is used as a systematic subjective approach to describe life experiences and situations to give them meaning (Burns & Grove, 1999; Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). Parahoo (1997) views the qualitative research is a form of social enquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experience and the world in which they live. It emphasizes the individuality of each person as well as their experiences. Based on these opinions, the researcher has emphasized understanding these factors by using the qualitative technique

to investigate leaders' behaviors, viewpoints, experiences, and feelings.

It is simple to build a relationship with participants that is mutually significant. In order to gather their experience, presumptions, and views, the participants were from three different sectors of constituent campuses. For this, first campus run under Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (R1), second campus run under the Faculty of Law (R2), and third campus run under the Faculty of Management (R3) have been selected for the study. The campuses run under the decentralized policy (R4) and policy of autonomy (R5) fall in study design. The researcher's home campus is not the part of discussion and analysis.

The key informants from R1, R2, R3, R4, and R5 include Assistant Campus Chiefs, faculty, staff, and students. For this, one Assistant Campus Chief (R1A) from each cluster, two faculties (R1B), two working staffs (R1C), and five students (R1D) were the parts of this research. Five separate informants provided for collecting information and data for the study, which was conducted utilizing in-depth interviews. In order to learn more about the respondents' experiences, challenges, and explanations related to their, face-to-face interviews were conducted in 2024 from January to June. The themes that emerged from the transcription were grouped under the study's focal point. To get at the result, the central idea was contrasted and linked with transformational leadership theory and other literature.

Results and Discussion

The findings are outlined in this part, along with a discussion of how they relate to theory and practice in the current

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context of Nepalese higher education. The contributing factors listed below are the results of the data analysis.

Idealized Influence

Idealized influence is one characteristic of transformative leadership, and it includes charismatic, inquisitive, and delicately and simply conveying their messages. It allows leaders to unite the stakeholders behind a common goal. It is frequently demonstrated by their capacity to pay attention to the here and now while actively listening to each team member. In addition to offering constructive criticism to each team member after a success, charismatic leaders commend individual team members. Out of 10 respondents from each sector, 40 percent respondents were positive about the leadership of the leadership of R1. Similarly, from R2 to R5 the respondents had 60%, 50%, 20% and 40% positive remarks of the respective leadership of these campuses. The informants have shared their thoughts that the chiefs of the campuses lack this quality and are more politically motivated and controlled by unnecessary things.

Inspirational Motivation

Inspirational motivation is the quality of a good leader who dedicates the goal. By developing a sense of purpose, it inspires the team members to be part of the organization. For this, communication skills need to be simple so that stakeholders may understand their vision. The future strategy developed by institutional heads must also convey their ideas with a feeling of authority. Leaders must be enthusiastic and visionary, igniting a room with their presence to focus on the long-term goals of the organization. In this case, the

leadership from R1 to R5 received only 50%, 60%, 60%, 30% and 40% positive responses. The informants have stressed that even the TU has not given any guidelines to be fulfilled by institutional heads. Therefore, there is administrative monopoly, financial irregularity, and academic problems.

Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual stimulation is another factor for leadership to use to push their followers to be creative and unconventional thinkers. It supports thinking critically and solving problems on the campus as a whole. This skill of leadership pushes the team members of the campuses to exceed their initial expectations and challenges the group's conventional assumptions. Promoting innovation facilitates decision-making and enhances the overall performance of the firm. To attain their teams' objectives, the leaders must, therefore, gradually alter the way followers approach problems and come up with fresh, creative ideas. The respondents of all sectors followed the previous trends with some changes. The leadership received 60%, 50%, 60%, 20% and 30% for leadership of R1, R2, R3, R4, and R5 respectively. The leaders need to understand that there are several paths to success and that there is no one-size-fits-all route to innovation. The institutional heads at constituent campuses lack intellectual stimulation rather than pro-group involvement. It has created problems for research work and innovative tasks at campuses.

Individual Consideration

The level of personal attention the leader gives to requirements is known as individual consideration (Wald & Golding, 2020). For this, transformative

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leadership motivates members by emphasizing how each individual contributes to the broader objective. By appreciating the needs, aspirations, and motivations of each individual member, team members may develop and learn in a setting that suits them. To engage others, leaders must be intelligent. Different campuses ranges from R1, R2, R3, R4, and R5 acquired only the responses as 60%, 70%, 60%, 20% and 40% only. As the informants informed us in the course of the discussion, TU has not been able to establish a coherent structural framework to build purely academic institutions, and even the heads of the institutions are not working to fulfill the criteria of higher education in the 21st century.

Collaboration

This has an impact on the caliber of leadership. The organizations emerging roles include employee motivation, internal resource allocation, and human resource management. The number of faculty, students, and staff are the aspects that contribute to a big innovative structure. Within this particular circumstance, participants from R1 stated:

I think working with faculty to plan and collaborate on the general growth of the organization is simple. The involvement, motivation, direction, coordination, and cooperation between faculty, administrators, and students can create a good environment for growth and specialization in any field.

The communication skills among the heads of the institutions can support academic strength, financial discipline, and governance at the administrative

level. The campuses lack, and as Sehar and Alwi (2019) and Western (2019) opine, an effective leader should prioritize the academic development and discipline enrichment of their personnel. In this case, participants R2 and R3 agree with the ideas of R1. This claim demonstrates the important function that leadership policy can have and should be rigorously followed to support institutional development and bring about structural change on campuses.

Level of Communication

Regular communication among stakeholders creates a sound and goal-oriented learning environment on campuses. Improving the environment both inside and outside the classrooms is significant, and it should be the goal of institutional heads for leading the campus to achieve positive outcomes. Interpersonal and intra-organizational relationships foster a long-lasting mindset to face the challenges of campuses. The triangle interaction between chief-faculty, chief-staff, and chief-students contributes crucial building blocks for improving the quality of education (Trisno & Nurdianto, 2015). Increased engagement between stakeholders results in increased mutual trust. Thus, to improve the caliber of leadership, constant contact is needed. In this matter, participants from R5 stated:

Negative engagement demotivates stakeholders, whereas positive interaction fosters energy for goal attainment. Encouragement of positive interaction reduces miscommunication between people and helps resolve conflicts. Similarly, unfavorable interactions lead to uncertainty and unease, which negatively impact the effectiveness

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of leadership.

The aforementioned claim emphasizes the necessity of positive relationships and interactions between leaders and stakeholders. While bad engagement leads to misunderstandings and uncertainty, which have a detrimental effect on institutional growth, meaningful connection inspires the leader to achieve the desired goals (Williams, 2013; Zhu, & Zayim-Kurtay, 2018; Huong, 2020).

Skills for Decision-Making

One of the most important skills for a campus chief to have is the ability to make timely decisions. Every stakeholder in an academic or non-academic setting is unaware of how to express their opinions and thoughts. In a situation like this, the chiefs need to decide the campuses' future direction right away (Sehar & Alwi, 2019). The judgment and analysis of decisions become one of the key elements of the amazing velocity of academic advancement. Participants from R3, R4, and R5 argued in favor of this concept, stating that the decisions made by the campus management committee and executive committee seem, in many cases, illogical, non-academic, and irrational and guided for individual benefit only.

The implementation of TU policy or policy made by campuses in many cases is not implemented in a right way. Participants from R1 and R2 follow the same perspective in different ways. The strategy of every decision should focus on academic strength, financial discipline, and administrative governance. Effective leadership must be approached through operational and strategic decision-making.

Problem-solving skills and Team Effort

The ability to identify difficulties inside an organization and handle them delicately is regarded as a problem-solving skill. Proficiency in problem-solving techniques is essential for improving academic performance in the education sector (Yusof & others, 2017). Leadership involves interaction between educators, students, and the community to resolve any issue that arises within the classroom and at any level. Regarding this matter, participants from R4, and R5 observe:

We have extensive experience and are aware of the issues that arise there. We have a lot of suggestions on how to handle the difficulties at the campus level. The institutional heads ignore whatever we suggest.

Unlike this, they are politically motivated, which is the main obstacle for TU at present. For this, appropriate team management is necessary for effectively running a campus. The teaming viewpoint emphasizes shared accountability and cooperative effort to energize a company (Samuel, 2012). The success of the campus as a whole is the result of a collective effort. In this way, the leaders must have crucial responsibility for the success of the campuses to identify the problems and take the necessary decisions in the required time. In order to improve the campus, a transformative leader must find a solution as quickly as feasible (Shoupe & Pate, 2010).

Conclusion and Implications

This research is implicated at the constituent campuses of TU only. Various elements influence institutional behavior and help people succeed in their academic endeavors. It is the

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responsibility of the heads to guide the institutions through routine contacts with internal and external stakeholders. For the benefit of campuses, systemic reformation is necessary. The personalities of the institutions serve as a qualitative representation of the desired results. A positive personality inspires stakeholders, which increases the mobility and accelerates learning. The remarkable personality inspires devotion to the organization and a great deal of patience in family life. Leadership is more lucrative and successful for the progress of the academic sector when there is mutual collaboration and partnership with the stakeholders. The effectiveness of the leadership is favorably influenced by the interpersonal relationships among the personnel. Leaders must be more graceful and helpful in increasing the organization's capability via real idea exchange and mutual collaboration when they possess diplomatic leadership qualities for issue solving. In different four aspects of leadership like idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration were measured in percentage, and head of campuses received i.e. R1 received (40-50-60-60), R2 received (60-60-50-70), R3 (50-60-60-60), R4 (20-30-20-20) and R5 (40-40-30-40) percentage only. Similarly, the leadership qualities like collaboration, level of communication, skills for decision-making and problem-solving skills and team effort, the views

of respondents are included which highlight the negative results. The result shows that R1 gets 52.5%, R2 acquires 60%, R3 obtains 57.5%, R4 22.5%, and gets R5 37.5%. It clearly indicates that R1, R2 and R3 acquire more than 50% whereas R4 and R5 receive below 40.

The concept of effective communication and collaboration, together with the encouragement of teamwork, must be adopted in order to control the frequency of cooperation. Campus administration should investigate important points for comprehending the 21st-century issues. Though different, traditional, reformist, and pragmatic leaders' points of view are not completely isolated from one another. Currently, imaginative, intentional, enthusiastic, and respectful of the feeling of participation in the decision-making process are important characteristics of transformative leadership at the university level. For individuals tasked with leadership duties, particularly those in higher education, it is imperative that they comprehend each of these points of view. The result shows that this is a crucial lesson for the university authorities to comprehend the real problems of leadership. The viewpoints of transformative leaders pinpoint the extent to which leadership principles correspond with societal and political goals and expectations, whereas pragmatism examines the variety of abilities and proficiencies that leaders require.

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