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Four Dimensions of Leadership in the Problem-Solving of Education Deans

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Abstract

This study links personal attributes of deans of schools and colleges of education to the problem solving contexts in which they make decisions that affect the programs they serve. We describe the mix of intellect, emotion, social acumen, and moral attributes that deans draw upon when they respond to vignettes that capture the multifaceted nature of problem solving in their positions. This study is a continuation of research that attempts to identify characteristics of deans of education who have survived in their role. This is an important issue, as schools and colleges report difficulty in identifying deans who can meet their needs (Anderson, 1999) and as the average tenure of education deans is only 4.5 years (Robbins & Schmitt, 1994).

Background

In the initial two studies in this series (Wepner, D'Onofrio, & Willis, in press), 12 deans were interviewed about their personal and professional backgrounds and their approach to leadership and decision-making. Using a combination of axial and selective coding, we found certain "habits of mind" common across the 12 deans. The deans saw themselves as assisting faculty with professional agendas and in obtaining resources. They showed an awareness of the importance of being open, flexible, approachable, even-handed, sensitive to faculty foibles and vulnerabilities, and grounded in principle as they worked toward goals. They responded in ways that suggested they were able to use their mistakes as an opportunity to grow, to regroup, retry, redo. They appeared very sensitive to and knowledgeable about their context and were able to alter their perceptions about their context as the situation demanded. Because of this familiarity with their context, they reported being comfortable in working with challenging situations. These deans functioned interdependently, looked at people as resources, handled dissonance, and were nimble problem-solvers.

More formally, on the basis of consensual analysis, we inferred from similarities and shared attributes in the deans' statements 11 themes from the responses of the 12 deans: (1) tolerates perplexity, contradiction, and ambiguity; (2) transcends polarities and sees reality as complex and contradictory; (3) recognizes that they and others function differently in different roles, and respond differently to different requirements and demands; (4) synthesizes views and ways of behaving; (5) expresses feelings vividly and convincingly; (6) acknowledges inner conflict in terms of needs and duties; (7) copes with conflict rather than ignores it or projects it: (8) tolerates self

and others in terms of individual differences and the complexity of people and circumstances: (9) cherishes personal ties with others; (10) holds to broad social ideals; and (11) sees relationships with others as an opportunity to negotiate different perspectives with mutually acceptable outcomes.

From these 11 themes, we proposed a conceptual model of the education dean's leadership that includes four dimensions: intellectual (Themes 1-3), emotional (Themes 4-6), social (Themes 7-9), and moral (Themes 10-11). Our model is related to Loevinger's (1976) theory of ego development which is a convergence of theories about individuals' developmental milestones characterized by hallmarks of affective and cognitive growth. In her model, Loevinger stresses the interconnectedness of cognitive and moral development. She argues that moral accountability necessarily involves cognitive, social, and emotional competencies.

Loevinger explains that, as individuals move from the dependency of self-protective orientations of childhood, they recognize their own individuality in relation to the individuality of others. The challenges and transitions of this progression into later stages of personality development include some of the following milestones: one's ethos is no longer based on black/white distinctions; one's affects are tempered by an awareness of connectedness to others; one's thoughts tolerate greater levels of complexity and contradictions; and one's social relationships are marked by an awareness of interdependence.

Individuals with highly developed cognitive competencies have the ability to contextualize specific content in a problem so that competing principles can be weighed and evaluated. These individuals are aware of and propose consequences that result from decisions based on principles and rules. These cognitive competencies have implications for personal relationships. The ability to contextualize a problem, for example, is a precursor to the ability to have the perspective of others and ultimately feel empathy. In addition, one is able to weigh the consequences of one's decisions in terms of the impact on other people, and this evolves into an awareness of one's accountability to others and for one's actions. We saw this in our earliest work with the deans when they expressed how they cherished relationships, how they actively sought information to gain a complete perspective on problems, how the consequences of their decisions weighed on their minds, and how they worked toward decisions that would lead to outcomes to serve the institution in a balanced way.

However, these studies of the psychological traits of leaders do not look at academic deans, let alone education deans, but rather at top-level leaders in academic settings or leaders outside of academic settings. Similar to other academic deans, education deans are positioned in the middle of administrative hierarchies in colleges and universities. Education deans must mediate between administration and faculty (Dill, 1980; Gmelch, 2002; Gould, 1983; Kerr, 1998; McCarty & Reyes, 1987; McGannon, 1987; Morris, 1981; Salmen, 1971; Zimpher, 1995). They arrange and organize personnel and material resources to accomplish objectives that have immediate importance. They

help faculty move in directions that correspond to the overall mission of the institution (Morsink, 1987).

Study on the Moral Dimension of Leadership

To explore the moral dimension of our model, we (Wepner, D'Onofrio, Willis & Wilhite 2002a) interviewed four additional deans, asking each of them to respond to four vignettes with a think-aloud protocol. Each of the vignettes included a dilemma with possible moral implications that the dean depicted in the vignette must solve. We employed the vignettes in order to gain direct evidence of the deans' reasoning as they grappled with four complex situations. Indeed, we found that this dynamic processing of a complex issue did disclose the moral perspectives of the deans and ways in which these moral perspectives were related to specific strategies for resolution that they proposed. We used theoretical coding to analyze the content of the deans' responses.

We used both theoretical coding and axial coding to analyze the content of the education deans' responses (Pandit, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). We used theoretical coding to look for and group together statements that were consistent with our revised definitions of moral and social themes. We used axial coding to discover individual perspectives of the problem solver. This type of coding allowed us to synthesize the text of all three interviews for each dean individually.

We found support for the moral dimension of our conceptual model in this third study (Authors, 2002a). All four deans made reference to broad social ideals (e.g., respecting intellectual property, academic integrity, commitment to diversity, valuing professional integrity, honoring commitments to agreements). In addition, all four deans expressed the importance of negotiating toward mutually satisfactory outcomes. However, the deans differed in their recommendations of specific strategies and actions, suggesting fundamental differences in their interpretation of their role as leaders in handling these situations. We hypothesized that the deans may have differed in their moral justifications for their decisions. Following Shell (1997), we proposed that an additional study focusing on the moral justifications of virtue, duty, consequences, justice, and well-being would be helpful in elaborating the moral dimension of our model. We further suspected that the differences in specific strategies and actions proposed by our four deans reflected the influence of other dimensions of the model (e.g., social, emotional, intellectual).

Study on the Moral and Social Dimensions of Leadership

To study the moral and social dimensions, we (Wepner, Wilhite, & D'Onofrio 2002), developed new vignettes to look in greater depth at the moral justifications that deans use in making decisions, and to see whether and how the deans used the social component to support their decisions. We interviewed three more deans, and asked each dean to respond to three different vignettes that simulated the complexity of real-life problems in a school or college of education.

We found that there was general support for the conceptual model's moral dimension of holding

to broad social ideals and negotiating for mutually satisfactory solutions to problems. The three deans' responses to the vignettes indicated that they held to broad social ideals such as taking responsibility, respecting individual differences, honoring thy neighbor, respecting all types of diversity, and helping others. The three deans revealed their ability to negotiate for mutually satisfactory solutions with the different moral arguments (justice, duty, virtue, consequences, and well-being) that they used to make decisions. As hypothesized, the deans' responses indicated that they leaned more toward deontological arguments (decisions based on principles or justice, duty, or virtue) or consequentialist arguments (decisions based on results or consequences and well-being) in their problem solving. While all three deans used all five moral arguments, they each had a propensity toward one type of moral argument.

There was general support for the conceptual model's social dimension. Early on in coding deans' social responses, we found that the original theme of "Tolerates self and others in terms of individual differences and the complexity of people and circumstances" was too broad to differentiate the type of social interaction. Therefore, we subdivided it into three themes: "Tolerates self and others"; "Builds on existing relationships"; and "Works within existing relationships." The deans described their transactions with others within their organizations, indicating varying degrees of tolerance for others, cherishing personal ties, coping with conflict, building on existing relationships, and working within existing relationships. Unlike the moral dimension, there was greater commonality in the deans' social arguments. Their frequent use of coping with conflict and working within existing social relationships indicated that they believed that they should deal directly with the issues and concerns of their constituencies, and work with alliances and mediate differences.

The axial codes revealed common moral and social themes, and supported findings from the thematic codes. They also disclosed the individuality of each dean's perspectives on the issues. Thus, while the deans were consistent in showing evidence of the proposed model's moral and social themes, the specific strategies that they proposed varied considerably. How deans approach decisions defines their role as deans and their imprint on their schools. For instance, if each dean was approached with the idea of bringing a new program to a school, they would not necessarily come to the same conclusion because of their own sense of relevant moral issues and their habits of mind for negotiating their beliefs and socializing within their context.

Current Study

Our findings on the moral and social dimensions support our view that the study of the leadership of deans needs to be multi-dimensional. Approaches that focus only on biographical, structural, contextual, or psychological factors fail to account for the complexity of situations in which deans function. Having examined two dimensions of our proposed model of leadership, we sought to study systematically all four dimensions at once: moral, social, intellectual, and emotional. The current study is, therefore, intended to build on our previous work through using vignettes. The

content of the three vignettes has been altered to provide a basis for evaluating the intellectual, emotional, social, and moral dimensions of the responses of the participating deans.

Methodology

Participants

Participants included four education deans who responded to individual interviews. The four education deans, two white males and two white females, have served in the deanship a minimum of six years in their current positions. We continued to postulate that a six to seven-year period would be a reasonable amount of time for deans to learn how to balance their skills and strategies with their intellectual, emotional, social, and moral perspectives. Furthermore, this length of time would allow education deans to have sufficient experience in their positions to be able to exercise their leadership with confidence and in a way that is compatible with the institutional context.

The deans in this study are serving as deans at multidisciplinary institutions, with one dean at a private doctoral/research extensive, two deans at a private doctoral/research intensive, and one dean at a public master's college/university I.Geographically, the Midwest and the mid-Atlantic region are represented. These four education deans had been nominated for participation in the study by one of the 16 education deans from the original three studies because of their reputations as effective leaders. Each nominating dean was asked to nominate via mail five individuals who stood out for their quality of leadership. The four deans in this study were selected because of their tenure in their current position, their availability, and their visibility as education deans based on their participation in national professional organizations. The deans from the previous studies also had remained in a deanship for a minimum of six years and were known for their national visibility and contributions to professional organizations.

Vignettes

We used vignettes to prompt deans to think aloud about ways in which they would frame, think about, and resolve problems with intellectual, emotional, social, and moral implications. This think-aloud protocol with vignettes offered the opportunity to have direct evidence of their reasoning strategies as they grappled with three different situations. This approach was intended to elicit a variety of responses to capture the education deans' subjective perspectives. Similar to projective tests, there are no right or wrong answers. Rather, an answer reflects how one has defined the problem represented in the vignette. We anticipated that the deans would disclose their four perspectives, and how these perspectives were related to the strategies that they proposed to bring about some type of resolution.

The three vignettes simulated the complexity of real-life problems in a school or college of education. A sense of realism was achieved by the details embedded within each vignette and the responses of the participants. Also, the vignettes were believable in that the respondents

frequently indicated that they had experienced a problem just like the problem described.

Vignette 1, which takes place at the hypothetical Serena University, is about the pressures and conflicts of advancing technology on a university campus. A new education dean finds himself chairing a university committee that is supposed to develop a mission for what will be a newly developed technology institute with a focus on web-based instruction. This institute is funded with several million dollars by an alumnus. The education dean is the likely candidate to head this institute; however, he has been very critical of web-based instruction in the past. To complicate matters, he is at philosophical odds with one of the committee members who happens to be the leader behind the development of this institute and the former instructor of the alumnus who donated the funds.

Vignette 2, which takes place at the hypothetical Prepare University, is about being in the middle of administrative mandates and faculty needs. The education dean has been assigned by the university president to write a grant with the dean of business. The grant funds are to be used for interdisciplinary, technology-based faculty development initiatives for senior faculty to correct the problem of complacency. In the meantime, the education dean is immersed in inter-generational strife on his faculty about faculty development funds with claims from both camps about the other side abusing privileges as either senior or junior faculty.

Vignette 3, which takes place at the hypothetical Premier University, is about the impasse of a search committee in recommending a faculty member for a position in educational foundations. The successful candidate is supposed to satisfy the School's goal of increasing minority representation on the faculty. Although both finalists are representatives of a minority group, both are potentially problematic in other respects. The education dean not only has to decide whether to recommend either candidate for the position, but also has to consider the politics of the faculty involved in the dispute, including her own history as a member of one of the departments involved in the dispute.

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol permitted deans to speak as individuals at length and in detail as they shared their reactions to the problems embedded in each vignette, and as they gave advice to the deans who were depicted in the hypothetical situations. The four education deans agreed to be interviewed by telephone. Two of us were the interviewers, and we each interviewed two deans. Each interview took approximately sixty minutes, and all interviews were tape recorded and transcribed.

The education deans read and responded to each vignette one at a time. One question was initially posed: "What advice would you give the dean in the vignette?" The interviewer prompted the dean along the way with probes and follow-up questions that were grounded in the deans' actual responses. This unstructured approach was used to produce personal and individual

interview texts that were spontaneous accounts of the ways in which the education deans evaluated the vignettes.

Coding

We used both theoretical coding and axial coding to analyze the content of the education deans' responses. Theoretical coding imposes concepts from the research problem as a standard for interpretation, and axial coding allows for analyzing the words of the respondents to find empirically supportable themes that are text-based. It classifies text according to constructs derived from a conceptual model. Axial coding mines text as found (e.g., respondents' words) and constructs empirically supportable categories that are inferred from that text.

The themes for the intellectual dimension were: Tolerates perplexity, contradiction, and ambiguity; Transcends polarities and sees reality as complex and contradictory; and Recognizes that they and others function differently in different roles, and respond differently to different requirements and demands. The themes for the emotional dimension were: Synthesizes views and ways of behaving; Expresses feelings vividly and convincingly; and Acknowledges inner conflict in terms of needs and duties.

The themes for the moral

dimension were: Justice

(decisions that seek a fair and balanced outcome); Duty (decisions based on rules and principles that have

a priori status as guidelines for behavior); Virtue (decisions based on their inherent goodness); Consequences (decisions that are judged in accordance with the value of their outcome, positive or negative, for stakeholders); and Well-being (decisions that seek to optimize safety and happiness). The themes for the social

dimension were: Tolerates self and others; Cherishes personal ties; Copes with conflict; Builds on existing relationships; and Works within existing relationships. We looked for statements that captured the intended meaning of a response for each dean. We used a consensus method to decide how to categorize the intended meaning of a response. If consensus was not immediate, we deliberated to consensus.

Axial coding was used to provide a more inductive understanding of the data and to discover individual perspectives of the problem solver. This type of coding allowed us to synthesize the text of all three interviews for each dean individually. We identified statements that had connotative importance, labeled groups (themes) in terms of their conceptual meaning, combined categories to discover thematic organization, labeled themes to describe subjective perspectives, and compared and contrasted themes from dean to dean in order to see how deans share perspectives, and how

they differ.

Findings

Theoretical Coding

The results of the theoretical (thematic) coding are summarized in Table 1. Each of the four deans exhibited responses reflecting all four dimensions of the proposed model. For all four deans, the dimension most frequently reflected in their responses was the intellectual one. For three of the four deans, the social dimension was the second most frequently exhibited. The least frequently exhibited dimension was the emotional one.

Table 1					
Percentage of Each Dean's Coded Responses Falling in Each Dimension of the Model					
Dimensions of the Model					
Dean	Moral	Social	Intellectual	Emotional	
Barnabus	31	24	36	9	
Crockett	27	29	35	9	
Dudley	17	34	45	4	
Everett	10	35	42	13	

The total number of coded responses for each dean was as follows: Barnabus – 64; Crockett – 63;						
Dudley – 105; Everett – 78.						

The theoretical (thematic) coding was also used to assess the degree to which the deans interviewed exhibited responses consistent with the different themes proposed for each of the four dimensions of the model.

Table 2 summarizes the relative frequency with which each dean gave responses reflective of the different themes within each theoretical dimension. Looking at the four deans collectively, all of the proposed themes for each dimension were reflected in the responses. However, some themes were clearly evidenced more frequently than others in the responses of the individual deans. For example, for the Intellectual Dimension, the most frequently coded theme for Deans Barnabus and Crockett was the "Recognizes They and Others Function Differently" theme. For Dean Dudley, the "Tolerates Perplexity" theme was the most frequently coded for this dimension, whereas the responses for Dean Everett on this dimension were relatively equally distributed over the three themes.

For the social dimension, approximately half of the responses of Deans Barnabus and Crockett were in the "Works with Existing Social Relationships" theme, whereas for Dean Dudley approximately three-fourths of the responses were relatively evenly distributed among the themes, "Builds on Organizational Relationships," "Works with Existing Social Relationships," and "Copes with Conflict." For Dean Everett, the two most frequently coded themes were "Copes with Conflict" and "Builds on Organizational Relationships."

The variability across deans was more pronounced for the moral and emotional dimensions. For moral responses, Deans Barnabus and Dudley exhibited the "Virtue" theme with the greatest relative frequency, but fully one-half of Dean Dudley's moral responses were consistent with this theme, compared to only 30% of Dean Barnabus' responses. For Dean Crockett, the most frequently evidenced moral theme was that of "Duty," whereas Dean Everett showed the "Justice" theme most frequently. For the emotional dimension, Deans Barnabus and Everett exhibited the "Synthesizes Views and Ways of Behaving" theme most frequently, whereas Dean Dudley's responses on this dimension were concentrated primarily in the "Acknowledges Inner Conflict" theme. Dean Crockett's most frequently coded emotional

dimension was "Expresses Feelings Vividly."

Table 2				
Percentage of Each Dean's Responses for Each Dimension Classified into the Proposed				
Themes for that Dimension				
Intellectual Dimension				
Dean	Tolerates	Transcends	Recognizes They and Others	
	Perplexity	Polarities	Function Differently	
Barnabus	13	39	48	
Crockett	18	18	64	
Dudley	47	34	19	
Everett	33	37	30	
Social Dimension				

Dean	Copes with Conflict	Tolerates Self and Others	Cherishes Personal Ties	Builds on Organ. Rel.	Works with Existing Soc. Rel.
Barnabus	27	13	0	13	47
Crockett	5	11	11	23	50
Dudley	22	14	11	28	25
Everett	37	4	11	30	18

Moral Dimension

Dean	Virtue	Duty	Conseq.	Justice	Well Being
Barnabus	30	20	15	15	20

Crockett	18	53	5	24	0
Dudley	50	11	6	28	5
Everett	0	25	25	50	0

Emotional Dimension

Dean	Acknowledges Inner Conflict	Expresses Feelings Vividly	Synthesizes Views and Ways of Behaving	
Barnabus	17	33	50	
Crockett	33	50	17	
Dudley	75	25	0	
Everett	30	20	50	

Axial Coding

The results of the axial coding indicated the unique characteristics of each dean.

Among the more frequent concerns of Dean Barnabus was the importance of moving the institution forward. She expressed a number of ways in which she would accomplish this goal. For example, she described the importance of

leverage in her discussions with faculty. She viewed

expertise as a form of

leverage that faculty bring to the table. She herself would be willing to use resources as her leverage with the faculty.

For Dean Barnabus, it was also important to be

straight with people, to

follow guidelines, and

to come to agreement on criteria. What was unique about Dean Barnabus among the sample of the four was her expectation that

faculty creates guidelines and she, as dean, not be afraid to use these guidelines to make tough decisions. She described herself as a person who negotiates, who sees relationships emerging from dialogue, and has the expectation of reciprocity in those relationships.

For Dean Crockett,

parameters were very important. Parameters were, in his view, frameworks for conducting relationships and working as a group. He believed it to be his duty as a dean to create parameters.

Parameters fostered structure, and

structure was needed to neutralize personnel agendas that get in the way of

goal-setting and

consensus. Dean Crockett felt it necessary to help faculty avoid counter-productive alliances and narrow perspectives.

For Dean Dudley, it was important to be perceived as a

person of principle: someone who is

fair and honest. He asserted that, to do this, it is necessary to be a morally and skilled communicator who asks fair questions, makes principled decisions, and builds relationships. Building relationships was emphasized in his interview as an important framework for decision-making, but he said that the

dean must ultimately decide. Since people are given to being overly critical at times and putting a personal twist on certain situations, it was important for Dean Dudley to work within guidelines and use ground rules.

For Dean Everett, it was important to

ask the big questions. She saw this as essential to move things along. In asking the big questions, she felt it necessary to make sense of things through listening, meeting, getting multiple perspectives, and

finding common ground. Dean Everett mentioned several times that it was

essential for a dean to be in control of one's self. What made this an interesting observation was that she did not couple control of one's self with the need to control others.

Conclusions

We found support for the conceptual model because all four deans displayed evidence of all four dimensions. Of the 16 themes used within the four dimensions, the four deans relied on eleven themes at least once. We found that the four deans relied most frequently on the intellectual dimension, and that three of the four deans relied next frequently on the social dimension. For the other dean, the theme exhibited with the second highest frequency was the moral one.

It appears that deans rely on the intellectual dimension to define problems and entertain solutions, yet use varied thematic orientations within the intellectual dimension to weigh decision-making options. For example, while one dean relies heavily on the theme, "Recognizes They and Others Function Differently," another relies on "Tolerates Perplexity." There also appears to be a relatively heavy reliance on the social dimension that seems to be driven by intellectual understandings. Again, the deans used varied thematic orientations to determine how they use the social dimension with two deans relying on "Works with Existing Relationships," and two deans using "Builds on Organizational Relationships," or "Copes with Conflict" most frequently to solve problems, advance a project, or accomplish a goal.

Although the intellectual dimension was used most frequently, the three original themes within the intellectual dimension posed difficulty for us. Specifically, there were responses that strongly suggested an intellectual dimension that did not fit into one of the three themes, and these responses often ended up being placed in the "Recognizes They and Others Function Differently" theme. For example, the deans would respond with questions about issues in the vignette that

indicated that they were seeking information; however, these responses were not really consistent with the existing themes, even though they clearly reflected the intellectual dimension.

We found that the moral dimension did not play as significant a role as the intellectual and social dimensions for three of the four deans. This finding could be a consequence of the revisions made to the vignettes from previous studies in order to include additional challenges for studying all four dimensions at once. Alternatively, it could be an indication of how deans resolve problems by using the intellectual dimension to hypothesize a prevailing theme and the social dimension to act on their hypothesis.

We believe that the emotional dimension may have been exhibited less frequently than the other dimensions because of the issues, thought processes, and questions presented in the vignettes. The deans did not express emotional responses to the characters in the vignettes unless they identified with the situations that the dean in the vignette was facing. Alternatively, the relatively low frequency of the emotional dimension could reflect the nature of the role of being dean. The deans could be well skilled at controlling or inhibiting emotional responses, especially in their self-reporting.

From the perspective of Loevinger's formulation of ego development, cognitive/intellectual functioning serves as the infrastructure for a more sophisticated and mature integration of social and emotional content in problem solving. It is tempting to argue that our findings are consistent with Loevinger's that intellectual competence is a precursor to social and emotional development. Our conclusion reflects the theoretical bias of our model and the fact that we rely on the quantification of responses within dimensions. Frequency counts are to some extent misleading because they do not provide any insight into whether a dean frames a problem using social or emotional parameters as the framework for intellectual arguments, or uses an intellectual context in which the social and emotional issues provide content for an argument.

Limitations

We realize that, based on our development of an emergent model for identifying deans' personal attributes for serving as leaders, we gave equal weight to all themes within all four dimensions of the conceptual model. Perhaps there are themes within each dimension that are more frequently used in resolving problems and that better reflect the nature of deans' responses.

We recognize that vignettes do impose limitations. They are time consuming to develop and use, and difficult to sample a wide array of problems that occur in every type of institutional environment. To offset this limitation, vignettes need to be sufficiently representative of common issues in recognizable settings and adequately rich with details to elicit a variety of thinking strategies. Another limitation of vignettes is that the problem-solver is asked to respond to a hypothetical situation, and it cannot be clear in advance that a proposed solution can be or would be implemented in a real-life situation. However, more than one dean commented that the vignette

hit home in that they had encountered similar situations in their own experiences in the not so distant past. One can state that vignettes exhibit validity because of the realism they evoke in the problem-solving situation. Therefore, these limitations do not negate the usefulness of vignettes in providing a glimpse of the respondents' approach to problem solving.

The great strength of vignettes is that the problem presented is not posed in the abstract, but rather is given substance and reality. They help in understanding how deans make decisions as they problem solve issues within the context and culture of an institution. This view is delineated by Robinson (1996) who proposes a problem-based methodology for the study of administrative practice. This methodology recreates the empirical details of administrative tasks and thus retains the inherent complexity of administrative problem-solving.

Another limitation of this study is the small number of deans interviewed. There is the possibility that these deans may not be representative of the population of education deans, and it would be useful to explore all four dimensions of the conceptual model with additional deans. However, it is important to note while the four deans interviewed made reference to all four dimensions of the model, their dependence on two to three dimensions and specific themes within each dimension indicated variability in the way they approach problems. This variability was expected, as deans will have had a variety of experiences in their careers that shape their specific approaches to specific situations. The proposed model is an attempt to look for underlying ways of thinking, feeling and perceiving that shape the leadership qualities of deans. Were we to interview additional deans with approximately the same length of service using these same vignettes, we would expect to find further evidence of variability in their specific suggestions and reactions, but we would also expect to find consistent evidence of all four dimensions in the deans' responses. Further research is needed on how contextual factors help explain individual variations within the four dimensions. While only four deans were included in this study, a total of 23 deans have now been interviewed over the five studies that comprise this ongoing research effort. Therefore, we are committed to including as varied a sample of successful deans as we can in continuing to develop our model of the leadership of education deans.

The exclusive reliance on the self-reports of deans is an additional limitation of this study. Self-perceptions are clearly not always accurate, and it is certainly possible that the deans in this study exhibit leadership behavior that is not consistent with their responses to the vignettes. In future research, it would be useful to attempt to determine whether faculty and colleagues who work with the deans being studied perceive the deans as the deans perceive themselves. Such research could conceivably lead to a refinement of the model in that deans may differ in the degree to which their perceptions of their leadership coincide with the perceptions of those with whom they work.

Implications

The findings of this study support our view that the study of the leadership of deans needs to be multi-dimensional. Approaches that focus only on biographical, structural, contextual, or psychological factors fail to account for the complexity of situations in which deans function.

We believe that an education dean's success depends on his or her ability to read one's context and create solutions that are mutually supportive of colleagues and the institutional culture. We recognize that a dean's context is a dynamic one in that faculty change (their level of influence, their relationship with each other, their individual needs, and their collective needs), administrative colleagues change in much the same way that faculty change, and upper-level administrators change in relation to contextual demands. Deans must be aware of these changes, and how these changes affect their schools and colleges. They also must be able to respond to these changes in ways that continue to help them be effective leaders.

While a dean's context is fluid and flexible, his or her core values are not. Education deans need to be aware of how they think so that they lead proactively rather than reactively. They need to understand how their social, emotional, intellectual, and moral characteristics influence their decision making. Unfortunately, education deans have not been prepared to examine their core values and how these values influence their decision-making. It is important that education deans carve out time through available forums (conferences, retreats, seminars, symposia, and institutes) to focus on their own development as leaders. They need to look at the themes that drive their decision making, and the extent to which these themes are used. One suggestion is to have educational leaders look at case studies in which they hypothesize what should happen, and then discuss their ideas in relation to what actually happened in such cases.

Another suggestion is to have schools, colleges, and departments of education examine their values, needs, and desires and screen education deans accordingly. We suggest a shift in the way in which we advertise and interview for education deans. The advertisement for the position of dean should ask prospective candidates to discuss their list of accomplishments in relation to personal leadership characteristics. Typically, advertisements for deanships encourage superficial responses that are easy for the candidate to craft and difficult for the search committee to disprove in the interview process. A cursory review of advertised positions reveals language such as "demonstrated ability to work cooperatively and effectively with staff, faculty, and students"; "excellent strategic planning and implementation skills, and superior interpersonal and communication skills"; "commitment to shared decision-making and collegiality"; or "the need to be highly creative and sensitive to the needs of culturally diverse students and faculty." One does not know how individual candidates will frame, think about, and resolve moral issues they confront in their positions. The advertisements need to ask applicants to provide evidence of how they solved specific problems in which competing values and conflicting perspectives played a significant part in their development as administrators.

We also suggest that it might be useful to include an administrative colloquium on the order of the

pedagogical colloquium suggested by Shulman (1993) as part of the interview process. Candidates could be given vignettes that include issues that have arisen or could occur at the institution. They could then be given quiet time to process the vignettes. Alternatively, they could be given the vignettes beforehand. Their responses to the vignettes would hopefully reveal principles that guide them as they go about solving a problem. It is important to pose questions that are not necessarily biased toward experienced deans but rather get at the heart of the way prospective candidates think about issues, think about people, and strategize.

Generally, the process of advertising and interviewing does not disclose the four dimensions of leadership. Even when a prospective dean can demonstrate the desired skills and abilities sought, one still does not know how the prospective dean will handle moral dilemmas. Thus, the entire application process would benefit from a shift in focus away from making claims about one's strengths and more towards the use of vignettes as part of an administrative colloquium that would help reveal how a person thinks about issues confronting deans. The vignettes need to include conflicting points of view and competing values to see how prospective deans handle moral dilemmas.

We recognize that an administrative colloquium cannot really tell who the person is, but it does provide patterns of thinking (habits of mind) about what is important to a prospective dean, and how that person thinks through problems that are at the heart of this position. Effectiveness in the deanship is combination of the person and the institutional culture. Questions about the state of teacher education and K-12 education, and visions for change are fine but do not help to understand how one handles day-to-day issues that really are the crux of the job.

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