

Role of Academic Leadership in Change Management for Quality in Higher Education in Pakistan

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Abstract

Currently, higher education is performing multi tasks for the development of a nation. It prepares and trains the work force for the 21st century. Higher education has broadened the fields of knowledge due to which different changes are occurring in every field of life as well as in the field of higher education and invites the academic leaders to integrate these changes and innovations for effective working in the global age. These changes have created many challenges to academic leaders, now academic leaders are responsible to trace these changes and add them for excellence in higher education. In some situations, academic leaders feel pressure as change management is necessary for advancement, while on the other hand local and cultural norms create some hurdles for them. It is up to academic leaders to motivate faculty members to accept these changes for the improvement of the standards of higher education and also prepare the faculty members to integrate these changes for fitness in the globalization. The objectives of the present study were to know the opinion of the faculty members about the change management and role of academic leaders to accept this change and implement for the betterment of higher education. The sample for the study was the faculty members of higher education institutions taken from Islamabad and Lahore. It is found that Integration of change is necessary for improvement in quality of higher education and it is the responsibility of the academic leaders to play their role for working in change management.

Introduction

It is a true that education is the only mean that can bring the desired changes in the human beings which can be utilized at present as well as for future. In the globalization, all the countries of the world, are striving to educate its mass to play their role for the economic development of the nation. Education of any level is not only beneficial for individual but as well as for his/her nation, an individual minimum years of schooling is beneficial for his/her nation as compared to whom who never visits school for education. With the passage of time, old knowledge geared new knowledge and also provided new horizons to think; now the meaning of education is beyond reading and writing. There is a race of “the best”, behind this race education is working as **catalyst** and every nation is trying to defeat her competitor in the field of education. The role of higher education is unique for the development of a nation; it is responsible for providing skilled and trained manpower for industry and prepares top management for the civil society. Higher education provides opportunities to generate new knowledge and train individuals to incorporate this new knowledge for improving the standards of different products, services and to offer these products and services to a large number of people on larger scale. Quality in higher education is a key element for the higher education institutions. Countries need to educate more of their young people to a higher standard.... The quality of knowledge generated within higher education institutions, and its availability to the wider economy, is becoming increasingly critical to national competitiveness (The Task Force on Higher Education and society, 2000). Information and Communication technologies (ICTs) has opened new perspectives for higher education, now, the new knowledge which is generated in any field and in any part of the world will affect the other parts of the world with the same acceleration. Higher education institutions cannot survive in isolation, it is necessary for Higher education institutions to accept the changes occurring in any part of the world and incorporate these changes in their own models for successful working in the technological world. Leaders of the higher education institutions are responsible to hunt the new knowledge and the changes occurred due to this knowledge and insert this phenomenon in their academic courses. Change management is an approach to build the organization according to the future needs. Issues and problems are always exists for some organization in different forms, but the leaders of the organization try to modify changes and make it compatible in the best interest of the organization. In Higher education institutions, leader is referred to as an academic leader and for the present’s world, it is the task of the academic leaders to motivate the staff

members to prepare themselves according to the needs of the time and groom the students in the line of future demands. In higher education institutions, these are faculty members who can make arrangements for the quality in higher education. Quality cannot be imposed from outside the institution, outside the team or outside the individual (Carr and Burnham, 1994).

In Pakistan, the situation of higher education is far better as compared to the last three decades. Higher education in Pakistan is facing great challenges and difficulties related to students, staffing, financing, poor infrastructure, poor research environment and employability of graduates (Aadil, Khan and Fahim, 2010). Higher Education Commission (HEC) has taken crucial steps for quality assurance in higher education. Motivation for research, training of faculty members and leaders on the well established patterns, more financial assistances and university-industry partnership are some land marks of higher education commission. Academic leaders were encouraged to visit foreign countries and bring new ideas and innovations in higher education sector with them and made arrangements for incorporating these ideas in the higher education for working with international communities.

Literature

For any country, higher education performs multi tasks. The role of higher education is not limited to fostering the economic development of nations and providing opportunities for individuals, it extends also to promotion of cultural diversity, political democracy and trade (Rena, 2010). It is a source of generating new knowledge and industry provides an opportunity to shape this knowledge in the form of a product. Quality is most important factor of higher education. Quality in Higher Education has become a primary agenda of the countries worldwide (Rena, 2010). The quality of higher education is extremely important for the development of societies with an aim to prepare knowledge and skill based human resources (Aadil, Khan and Fahim, 2010). There is general recognition around that world that successful development requires high quality education and that the benchmarks for quality are, whether we like it or not (Hayward, 2008). The World Bank report (2002) about higher education says that: “emerging role of knowledge as a major driver of economic development,” and draw attention to the importance of higher education as: “Tertiary education is necessary for the effective creation, dissemination and application of knowledge and for building technical and professional capacity.” They further note that “Developing and transition countries are at risk of being further marginalized in a highly competitive world because their tertiary education systems are not adequately prepared to capitalize on the creation and use of knowledge.”

Quality Issues in Higher Education in Pakistan

Quality can be viewed in terms of perfection, excellence, and value for money, fitness for purpose, or transformation (Harvey and Green, 1993). The quality benchmark is always fixed by the customer and not by the seller or provider. The education sector must provide the quality that the industry or market demands and not what the university think they should teach (Khan, 2008). Harvey (1997) recognized five wide approaches for defining quality in higher education. These are (i) quality meaning exceptional (ii) quality meaning perfection (iii) quality meaning fit for purpose (iv) quality meaning value for money and (v) quality meaning transformation.

In Pakistan, quality in higher education is an issue, there are many challenges to higher education but higher education is trying to minimize these problems by introducing reforms and international standards. Illiteracy, huge population, lack of resources, inefficient management system and financial constraints are some of the problems for higher education. HEC has implemented some initiatives to overcome these issues.

Academic Leadership

Leader is a person who has capacity to drive others keeping in view the benefits of the organization as well as self respect of the followers. It is necessary that leader must have some clear vision and work for the betterment of the followers. An academic leader is one who has broader vision of his field and has power to bring the change in his/her field. He/she must have communication power to motivate his/her colleagues to change. An academic leader must embrace change for the benefit of his/her organization beyond his/her like or dislike. He/she know what the need of the market is and how it may be approached.

Moore and Diamond (2000) states the following characteristics of academic leadership:

- Leadership is the capacity to release and engage human potential in the pursuit of common cause.
- Sustainable change must come from within the academic unit, driven there by the vision and commitment of its academic leadership.
- Academic units are particularly challenged in achieving unity around a focused mission because of the independent mindset that pervades the academic culture.

- Leadership is a personal, face-to-face enterprise. Leaders empower others through example and mentoring. In turn, leaders are empowered to the extent that others engage in pursuing the institution's mission.
- The Focus strategic planning process is an instrument for exercising academic leadership—an opportunity to bring together and mobilize a partnership of stakeholders in pursuit of the institution's mission.

Academic leaders are the responsible for bringing such changes which are need of the time. Customers' satisfaction is at the top for the success of any business. Brand name reflects the inner side of the institution. In higher education field, the big name depends on the academic leaders. Academic leaders' work style, level of acceptability and will to change are most important factors which set the credibility of the higher educational institutions. In the current era of knowledge based economy there is pressure on higher education institutions to ensure that the graduates meet with the demands of industry and society. For educators and policy planners it is essential to know how best this objective can be achieved (Siddique, 2008).

Change Management

Change is a normal phenomenon in the today's world. Every moment, changes are occurring in almost all fields of life. Change management is to manage the change for benefits and to survive in the changing world. Market situation, technology, government laws and regulations and economics are some external forces which bring change while corporate strategy, workforce, technology and equipment and employee attitude are some internal forces of change (Passenheim, 2010).

Change management' is a strategic activity aimed at getting the best outcomes from the change process (Australian National Training Authority, 2003). Change management is a systematic approach to dealing with change, both from the perspective of an organization and on the individual level. ...change management has at least three different aspects, including: adapting to change, controlling change, and effecting change (<http://searchcio-midmarket.techtarget.com/definition/change-management>).

Passenheim (2010) define change management as:

1. Correct understanding of the organizations that want or need to be changed.
2. Correct understanding of the people who are willing or forced to change.
3. The effectively realization of change.
4. Understanding the dynamics of change.

Stanley (2006) describes the following seven principles for change management:

1. Plan for change from a solid base.
2. Identify discrepancies between formal and informal practice in the organization.
3. Control expectations about the proposed changes.
4. Select change agents carefully.
5. Build support among like-minded people however they are recruited.
6. Identify those opposed to change and try to neutralize them.
7. Avoid future shock.

Australian National Training Authority (2003) documented the following Specific reasons for managing change:

- Maximize the opportunities presented by the proposed change
- Identify and overcome impediments
- Minimize disruption to programs and services
- Ensure staff are engaged with the change process to achieve the best possible outcomes
- Maintain harmony and good relations within the organization and externally
- Prepare, and support students and staff, to ensure effective change and to achieve strategic goals and vision.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present are to:

1. Find the opinion of the faculty members about the change management.
2. Find the opinion of faculty about the role of academic leaders to accept change and implement this change for the sake of quality in higher education.

Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to the public sector universities of Lahore and Islamabad because it was not possible for the researchers to collect data from all the public sector universities of Pakistan.

The Study

Sampling Technique

Multi stage sampling was involved in this study. At first stage, two public sector universities from Lahore and Islamabad were selected. At the second stage, department of Education, Psychology, Computer Sciences and Management Sciences were selected. A total of 200 faculty members from the sample departments were randomly selected. Out of 200, a total of 150 questionnaires were collected back by the researchers.

Instrument

A self developed questionnaire (on five point Likert scale) was used for knowing the opinion of the faculty members of higher education institutions about the change management and role of leadership for quality in higher education. Two aspects, (accept change and implementation of change) were covered in the questionnaire about which the respondents were asked and there were five statements about each aspect.

Validity of the Instrument

For validation, the instrument was presented to ten faculty members of higher education institutions of Islamabad. The faculty members gave some comments for the improvement of the instrument; some statements were rephrased and improved in the light of the comments.

Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was delivered to sample faculty members by the researchers. The selected faculty members were called through mobile phone as well as approached by the researchers. Out of 200 questionnaires, a total of 150 questionnaires were collected back. Each statement of the questionnaire was tested by applying chi-square technique on significance level 0.05.

Item #	Statement	SA	A	UNC	DA	SDA	χ^2
Accept Change							
1	Changes are occurring in every field and change in teaching-learning process is the need of the time.	48	102	0	0	0	273.6
2	Change through research can assure quality in higher education.	59	91	0	0	0	242.1
3	Academic leadership must have an eye on the change in the field.	52	98	0	0	0	260.3
4	Academic leadership should manage comparisons with international trends and bring changes for quality in higher education.	41	109	0	0	0	302.1
5	Time to time change is needed for working in globalization.	45	98	7	0	0	239.3
Implementation of Change							
6	Academic leadership must collect opinion of faculty members about change.	74	60	16	0	0	161.1
7	Academic leadership must prepare faculty members for implementation of change in teaching learning process.	42	108	0	0	0	297.6
8	Academic leadership is responsible for designing new approaches and implementing these approaches for enhancing quality in higher education.	58	90	2	0	0	232.3
9	Academic leadership is responsible to train faculty members according to the new changes for improvement of quality in higher education.	80	70	0	0	0	226.7
10	Academic leadership must facilitate and motivate faculty members for bringing positive results of change.	54	96	0	0	0	254.4

df=4

table value of χ^2 at 0.05 = 9.488

Discussion

New knowledge is generating all around the world and affecting the entire world equally. This phenomenon has created many changes in almost all fields of life and it becomes necessary for the higher education institutions to accept these changes for working in the globalization. In the current scenario, higher education is responsible for many tasks, research in higher education is bringing new changes which are facilitating human beings as well as creating new challenges to man. The respondents of the study agreed that change in teaching learning process is the need of the time. The research in higher education is bringing many changes after testifying the each equation which ensures quality in higher education. The respondents were of the opinion that academic leaders must have an eye on the changes and must make comparison their education with international changes for the improvement of quality in higher education. The respondents agreed that academic leaders must know the opinion of faculty members about the change and must prepare the faculty members to accept change in teaching learning process. The respondents think that academic leaders must train faculty members to accept change for the improvement and encourage them for adopting change.

Findings

1. Integration of change is necessary for improvement in quality in higher education.
2. Research can increase the level of quality in higher education.
3. Academic leadership is responsible to investigate the new change and make comparison with international changes for improvement in quality of higher education.
4. Academic leadership must know the opinion of faculty members about change prepare faculty members for accepting change.
5. Academic leadership is responsible to train and motivate the faculty members for accepting change .

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