

MODELS OF NEW LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR VIETNAM

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Abstract:

Higher education worldwide is in a period of transition affected by globalization and internationalization, of changing relationships between universities and the workplace, the markets, and even within themselves. Such transition requires each institution to change or improve its leadership for sustainable development. This paper aims to introduce some models of new leadership in higher education emerged around the world and then provides some suggestions to universities in Vietnam.

1. Leadership versus management

Leaders do the right thing, managers do things right (Peter Drucker, 1974)

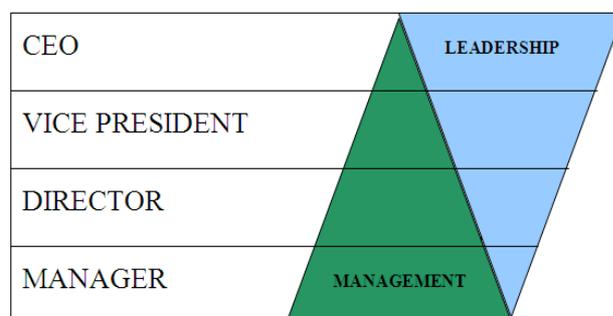
According to McCaffery (2010), the words *Manager* and *Leader* have their origins and development as follows:

- 'Manager' is derived from the Latin *manus*, which is rooted from the 16th century Italian word, *managgiare*, referring to the handling, training and control of horses. This word was then brought to England and applied to the handling of armies and the controls of ships, and became known as '*managers*'. The word then gradually came to be applied to anyone who had a responsibility for organizing activities and controlling their administration.
- 'Leader' is derived from *laed*, a word common to all the Old North European languages, meaning 'path', 'road', 'course of a ship at sea' or 'journey'. A leader is, therefore, someone who accompanies people on a journey guiding them to their destination. Today, this word is popularly defined as the person who leads or commands a group, organization, or country¹

Gupta² provided some differences between leadership and management as follows:

- Leadership is synthesis, management is analysis
- Leadership has long-term impact, management has short-term goals
- Leadership is an intention of climbing to next level, management is the process of efficiently executing the plan

In any organization, both leadership and management exists at every level of management, however the amount of each varies according to the management hierarchy as Gupta described:



¹ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/>

² <http://practical-management.com/Leadership-Development/Leadership-Vs-Management.html>

In the context of higher education, the distinction between leadership and management is much clearer in Western institutions where leadership role and management role are clearly separated at some levels. At the University of Essex (in UK), for example, faculty manager has the role as follows³:

The Faculty Manager provides management support for the Pro-Vice-Chancellor with a particular responsibility for the administrative effectiveness of the Faculty. The Faculty Manager supports the development and delivery of the Faculty Plan, and co-ordinates cross-faculty initiatives and activities. The Faculty Manager works closely with the Faculty Dean, Heads of Department and Departmental Administrators. The Faculty Manager also plays a key role in representing the Faculty within the University, particularly in relation to the Professional Services.

2. Models of new leadership

Similar to many models applied successfully in organizational governance, the following models of leadership first emerged in the areas of business and then applied to other areas with some modifications (McCaffery, 2010). Such models are not new in business, but their applications in other areas have been discussed and tested widely just in recent years.

2.1 The visionary leader

Over the years, there have been more than 33,000 studies into the qualities of top leaders. All conclude that "vision" is the most identifiable quality of a leader⁴. According to Patrick⁵, a visionary leader is a:

- Good communicator:

A visionary leader has good communication skills. He knows how to verbalize his dreams and goals and can explain them to his team. In addition to sharing his vision for the future, a visionary leader is also an active listener. He should listen to others' ideas and thoughts, and incorporating them into a larger goal for all. He also knows how to help the team members meet their personal goals.

- Charismatic leader:

Visionary leaders also have charisma. Merriam-Webster defines charisma as a "special charm or appeal that causes people to feel attracted and excited by someone (such as a politician)" or a "personal magic of leadership arousing special popular loyalty." Charisma is a natural attraction that draws people to the leader and the leader's enthusiasm.

- Chief organizer:

While many leaders have administrators that manage the processes, the visionary leader often sets up the organization by establishing key departments or functions. He directs, develops and conducts meetings until reliable help is found. During the initial organization, the leader will take the time to build a solid foundation through establishing boards, councils or a company hierarchy.

- Risk-taker:

Visionary leaders are notable risk-takers. These leaders are willing to gamble on something they believe in, but the gamble is often a measured one. Visionaries are creative people that take the initiative with the appropriate action. This kind of leader starts small by taking measured steps then later bigger risks.

³ http://www.essex.ac.uk/hods/documents/Faculty_Mgr_JD.pdf

⁴ <http://successnet.czcommunity.com/words-of-wisdom/7-qualities-of-visionary-leadership/291/>

⁵ <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/characteristics-visionary-leadership-31332.html>

- Strategic planner:

Strategic planning involves creating an action plan with a particular strategy in mind. The leader's vision defines what the organization will look like in the future and how it will function. His strategies are designed to take him toward his ultimate vision.

McCaffery (2010) provides a list of qualities that a visionary leader should have in Box 1 (in the Appendix).

2.2 The 'learning organization' leader

We no longer live in a world where we can expect authorities to know the answers. While businesses today face challenges that can be met by applying technical expertise, they also face challenges that require many people in the organization to learn new habits, attitudes and values. Popularized in the 1990s, the learning organization was grounded in the widespread belief that 'the rate at which organizations learn may become the only sustainable source of competitive advantage in the future' (Senge, 2006). In the context of rapid change, only organizations capable of flexibility, adaptability and productivity could expect to flourish. In Senge's model, leadership is focused on three critical roles: *designer, teacher and steward* (or servant). These functions in themselves are not new, but in the context of the learning organization they have new meaning as shown in Box 2 (in the Appendix).

2.3 The liberating leader

To McCaffery (2010), the concept of the leader as liberator developed as a response to the sweeping changes in the external environment in working patterns, access to information, the nature of competition and so on which has effected all organizations over the last decade. In this environment, the leaders should create situations where continuous improvement can occur, recognize the need for continuing change and urge everyone to meet the challenges, and encourage those closest to the tasks to make their own decisions. Characteristics of the liberating organization are shown in Box 3 (in the Appendix), in which "flat organizational structure" (with the purpose of cutting out functionalism, bureaucracy and the worship of status) is seen as the first feature. The profile of the liberating leader can be found in Box 4 (in the Appendix).

3. Implications for higher education in Vietnam

There are so many reports, papers, and research focusing on limitations and challenges to higher education in Vietnam, especially on leadership and management area (most updated discussions can be found at Ho & Berg, 2010; Truong, 2012). While others mainly focus on leadership and management change at ministry level, this paper suggests some changes possible at the institutional level.

3.1 Separating roles of leadership and management

In Vietnamese universities, most rectorate and faculty board members play their role as leader and manager, even with the rectors (or presidents) or the deans. Such a mix in responsibilities makes them spend most of their time in management work. As a result, their devotion to leadership work (such as building vision and goals, coordinating units/departments in tasks, external relations, etc.) may become limited. Therefore, it is necessary to separate these two roles at the faculty and institution levels. This separation does not mean that more people should involve in the rectorate or faculty board, but links to the task allocation among the board members. Ideally, rectors (or presidents) and deans should be seen as 'leaders', and a vice rector or deputy dean should be regarded as institution or faculty 'managers'.

3.2 Utilizing models of new leadership

As recognized in Ho and Berg (2010) that many Vietnamese educators, who belong to "a culture of centralized planning and bureaucratic decision-making", are lacking opportunities to learn new and best practices emerged around the world, the above models of leadership can served as

effective approaches for improving leadership quality at their institutions. To the author, these models can and should be utilized in higher education in Vietnam for the following reasons:

- As affected by the centralized governance system for a long time, leadership in most of universities in Vietnam still reflects a status of functionalism and bureaucracy. Such a status has created hindrances to the development of the whole higher education system and also of each institution in Vietnam.
- Reform in educational management and leadership is the first priority in the Educational Development Strategy – Period 2011-2010 promulgated by the Government of Vietnam.
- The above models have actually implemented with different levels in Vietnamese universities but many important features of these models seem not to be utilized significantly, such as (the whole features each model can be seen at the Appendix):
 - Empowerment: Creating empowering opportunities that involve the organization's members in making the right things (the visionary leader)
 - Building shared vision: Encourage personal vision, blending extrinsic and intrinsic visions (the 'learning organization' leader)
 - Liberates: Does not blame people for the mistakes, encourages the people closest to the job to take their own decisions (the liberating leader)
- The successful learning and application of those models can help the institution leaders become less bureaucratic in their leadership, develop an environment which encourages much more staff in devoting their capacity and expertise to the institution.

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APPENDIX

Box 1. The visionary leader

Behaviours

1. Focus: providing a clear focus on key issues and concerns, i.e. on the right things
2. Communication: getting everyone to understand this focus through effective organizational communication practices
3. Consistency: acting consistently, over time, so as to develop trust
4. Respect: demonstrating, through actions, care and respect for the organization's members
5. Empowerment: creating empowering opportunities that involve the organization's members in making the right things

Personal characteristics

1. Self-confidence: a grounded belief in one's ability to make positive difference
2. Being comfortable with empowerment: a grounded belief in the ability of others to make a positive difference
3. A long-term vision span (c. 10 years)

Culture building

A propensity for building strong cultures by instilling assumptions, values and beliefs that support four key organizational functions: managing change, achieving goals, coordinating teamwork and maintaining a vibrant organizational culture.

Source: Sashkin (1995), adapted by McCaffery (2010)

Box 2. The leader's new work: building learning organizations

The learning organization

Based on five disciplines (or component technologies), each 'discipline' is a series of principles and guiding practices to master:

1. Personal mastery
2. Mental modes
3. Building shared vision
4. Team learning
5. System thinking – the conceptual cornerstone that integrates the first four

New roles of leader

Leader as designer – teacher – steward

New skills of leadership

Building shared vision

- Encouraging personal vision
- Communicating and asking for support
- Visioning as an on-going process

- Blending extrinsic and intrinsic visions

Surfacing and testing mental models

- Seeing leaps of abstraction
- Balancing inquiry and advocacy
- Distinguishing espoused theory from theory in use
- Recognizing and defusing defensive routines

System thinking

- Seeing inter-relationships, not things, and processes, not snapshots
- Moving beyond blame
- Distinguishing details complexity from dynamic complexity
- Focusing on areas of high leverage
- Avoiding symptomatic solutions

Source: Senge (1990), adapted by McCaffery (2010)

Box 3. Characteristics of the liberating organization

Feature	Purpose
A flat organizational structure	To cut out functionalism, bureaucracy and the worship of status
Inversion of the pyramid	Leaders and managers support employees who interface directly with customers, i.e. 'leadership from behind'
Organizational democracy	To value the contribution of all alike and to promote their self-esteem; colleagues not subordinates
A liberating climate	To encourage healthy development and growth
Genuine empowerment	The unequivocal transfer of authority, responsibility and resources to those closest to each group of tasks
A 'blame free' culture	To use mistakes as learning opportunities, not to levy punishment
Self-managed team	Independent workgroups with the authority and responsibility to achieve their agreed targets
Mutual trust	The rock upon which all effective working relationships are built
Ownership	Established through shared information, the provision of user-friendly procedures and the celebration of successes
Vision	An inspirational view of the future, communicated to all, that acts as an organizational head group, lighting the path ahead
Values	The principles, beliefs and standards to which the organization holds
Communication	To be open, comprehensive and without hidden agendas; clarifying rather than clouding and natural without affectation
Development	An integral part of working, managing and leading. Coaching and encouragement to learn are second nature

Innovation	Sensible risk-taking is encouraged and fear is banished
Attitude	Proposed changes are seen as challenges to be met and managed rather than opposed

Source: Turner (1998), adapted by McCaffery (2010)

Box 4. Profile of the liberating leader

Liberates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not blame people for mistakes • Encourages the people closest to the job to take their own decisions • Listens to their staff • Encourages full and open communication • Operates systems based on trust, rather than suspicion • Encourages staff to develop new ideas
Encourages and supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepts responsibility for the actions of their staff • Gives praise where it is due • Recognizes and acts to minimize other people's stress • Supports staff when they need support • Regularly meets with individuals to clarify direction • Makes people feel important and shows that they have faith in them
Achieves purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieves results • Agrees demanding targets with individuals or teams • Consults those affected before making decisions • Is willing to take unpopular decisions in order to move forward • Seeks out future challenges/opportunities • Regularly communicates an inspirational views of the future • Constantly seeks to improve the way things are done
Develops people and teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages other people to learn • Encourages people to work as a team • Regularly meets with the team, as a whole, to review progress • Takes time to develop and guide their staff • Deals effectively with breaches in standards of behaviour • Treats other people's mistakes as learning opportunities
Example to others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively encourages feedback on their own performance • Communicates an air of enthusiasm

Relationships built on trust

- Works on their own learning
- Practices what they preach
- Openly admits mistakes
- Sets a good example to others by their own behaviour
- Does not put self-interest before the interests of their staff
- Keeps promises and does what they say they will do
- Is in touch with, and sensible to, people's feeling
- Is calm in a crisis, and when under pressure
- Is honest and truthful
- Does not take personal credit for other people's work
- Is always fair

Source: Turner (1998), adapted by McCaffery (2010)

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