

Investigating Task-Oriented Leader' Behavior in Public and Private Universities to Establish the Structure of Quality Improvement

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Abstract

This study aimed to ascertain if task-oriented leaders' behavior and the establishment of structures to improve the caliber of universities are correlated. Furthermore, this research also assessed the disparity in the quality improvement framework between public and private universities and the variation in task-oriented leadership behavior shown by leaders in these universities. The survey comprised 369 participants, including Punjab's heads of departments, faculty deans, and directors of quality improvement cells drawn from public and private universities, as well as those accredited by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). Task-oriented leaders' behavior was assessed using the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ), while universities' quality improvement progress was gauged using the Institutional Performance Questionnaire (IPQ). The independent sample t-test and Pearson Correlation Coefficient were used to examine the data. According to the research, leaders at public universities are more task-oriented than private ones. Furthermore, the study showed that private universities had better quality improvement structures than public universities. The results of this study indicate that enhancing the quality of universities may benefit from a task-oriented leadership style.

Keywords: Task-oriented Leader, Quality Improvement, Institutional Performance.

Introduction

Leadership behavior is one of the most critical factors affecting the effectiveness and caliber of private universities. University administrators significantly influence academic achievement, institutional culture, and ongoing quality improvement. Recent studies have focused on the influence of task-oriented leadership on organizational performance and quality improvement. Task-oriented leadership focuses on attaining specified objectives and involves planning, coordinating, and monitoring activities (Northouse, 2018).

Task-oriented leadership entails establishing responsibilities and clear objectives and ensuring that tasks are carried out successfully and efficiently. The research, by analyzing this leadership style, improves our knowledge of how leaders at public and private institutions handle their tasks and responsibilities (Yukl, 2013). The main goal of this study is to create a framework for quality improvement based on task-oriented leadership behaviors. A framework like this may help

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university administrators implement initiatives that improve student outcomes, academic standards, and institutional performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Despite the availability of resources for establishing institutions, it has been observed that there needed to be consistent results and achievements.

Universities are now facing a scenario characterized by poor productivity and quality, leading them to the brink of hardship. These institutions are distant from having organized work environments, resulting in a decline in organizational performance (Abbas & Yaqoob, 2009).

The nation is encountering several obstacles to globalizing its educational system. The primary concerns in Pakistan's higher education system are inadequate governance of academic institutions and substandard quality of instruction. There are disparities in governance between public and private sector universities. Pakistan lacks effective oversight mechanisms to regulate its education system (Nisar, 2019; Subhani, 2013).

To address the issues mentioned above, it is imperative that we overhaul our leadership practices and proactively take measures toward this objective. Specific objectives must be achieved to improve organizational performance. A leader is essential in forming an organization's culture, and his behavior motivates individuals to strive for a shared vision and achieve desired results.

Leader's Behavior

A leader's behavior potently displays their beliefs, values, and vision since it shapes their influence over others and their decision-making process. The leader communicates their standards when they possess a clear and logical visualization for the company (Johns & Saks, 2007).

The leader's behavior is the primary focus of the organization's advancement in quality. New educational paradigms, such as the delegation of power and information sharing, emphasize the significance of leadership Behavior on a global scale. A leader's behavior is the primary catalyst for the strength and productivity of both public and commercial enterprises. The leader's ability to effectively handle organizational pressure is crucial for long-term survival.

The leader's behavior directly influences the interpersonal relationships and interactions inside the cohort group. A leader also deliberately influences strikes, organizational configurations, and the company's values (Peterson et al., 2003).

Furthermore, in the current era of intense competition, the significance of work happiness for both individuals and organizations has been emphasized. The extent to which an employee actively and harmoniously engages in the company is directly proportional to their level of work satisfaction. The productivity and quality of work are contingent upon the job happiness of the followers, with the leader's Behavior being of utmost importance in this crucial scenario (Mehmet & Büşra, 2016).

The administrators of universities concentrate on introducing cutting-edge strategies for hiring capable and experienced faculty members and putting together engaging educational platforms. (Porras & Robertson, 1992, p-721).

Task-oriented Leaders' Behavior

This research primarily focused on the behavior of task-oriented leaders, as proposed by contingency theory. The contingency theory of a leader's behavior has expanded the theoretical comprehension of governance by examining the influence of many conditions on leaders (Northouse, 1997). In 2006, Yuki found three distinct task-oriented behaviors that firms employ as a foundation for quality improvement.

The behaviors include a range of actions and behaviors.

- 1- Organizing job tasks
- 2- Defining and specifying responsibilities and goals
- 3- Supervising activities and assessing performance.

A task-oriented leader can effectively establish objectives to enhance organizational performance. He effectively communicates and motivates his subordinates, providing them with clear deadlines for work completion in alignment with predetermined objectives (Fey et al., 2001).

The task-oriented leader prioritizes finding solutions to fulfill particular objectives rather than focusing on realigning with personnel. Whenever a task is assigned, the leader promptly takes action and begins executing the process. Furthermore, the leader formulates the project plan, identifies the most effective methods and resources, and clearly defines all the tasks and duties for the staff (Forsyth, 2010).

Academic scholars consider task-oriented leadership to be the primary exemplary leadership behavior due to its suitability for a controlled work environment in institutions. The task-oriented leader focuses on planning and organizing work, clarifying goals, identifying staff responsibilities, and structuring task phases for successful completion. The leader's critical tasks include ensuring the availability of essential supplies, providing technical support, and ensuring the presence of necessary equipment (Anzalone, 2017).

A task-oriented leader ensures that strategies align to fulfill the undertaking statement and goals, enhancing the institutions' productivity and usefulness (Lambinico, 2016).

Enhancement of Quality in Universities

The standard of universities is an essential element of durability in the present-day global context. The key factors contributing to organizational performance growth include:

- Highly skilled faculty members.
- The endowment of excellent education.
- A contemporary curriculum.
- The expansion of human resources.

Interventions in information and communication technologies are essential for advancing universities in the 21st century. There is a rivalry based on intellectual capacity, where nations with more intellectual property are more successful globally (Rena, 2010).

Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC) has implemented a quality improvement framework to maintain high academic program standards and streamline the necessary processes. Every institution has established quality enhancement cells to implement this framework. These cells are accountable for both internal and peripheral quality reassurance tasks.

The accrediting committee works for quality validation at the program level and the HEC mechanism at the organizational level. Establishing the framework for quality improvement involves a systematic approach to collecting qualitative and quantitative data. This data pertains to enhancing student academic programs, and it was evaluated using various sources. Assessment is behavior to see whether students have achieved the expected learning outcomes and academic benchmarks (Batoool & Qureshi, 2008).

Quality improvement assessment is based on performance evaluation criteria, which are used to achieve all objectives, missions, and resources.

Essential Elements of Quality Improvement

HEC-approved universities exhibit quality enhancement through the following attributes:

- Implementing a structured and systematic quality improvement system is crucial for assessing and enhancing the academic program and other institutional services.
- The evaluation of quality improvement is evident in the institution's stated strategic plans. Institutions' jurisdicative and statutory frames have a quality declaration system, which is part of the university's periodic assessments (Lawton et al., 2014).

According to the theoretical framework this research offered, the behavior of a task-oriented leader determines the framework for enhancing quality in universities. Exploring how a task-oriented leader is more effective in globalizing a nation's educational system is a significant component of the present research. The study's researchers assumed that a task-oriented leader would work to develop the quality of universities because, according to the contingency theory, this type of leader places a greater emphasis on task accomplishment, assigns tasks to assistants, and sets targets.

Objectives of the Study

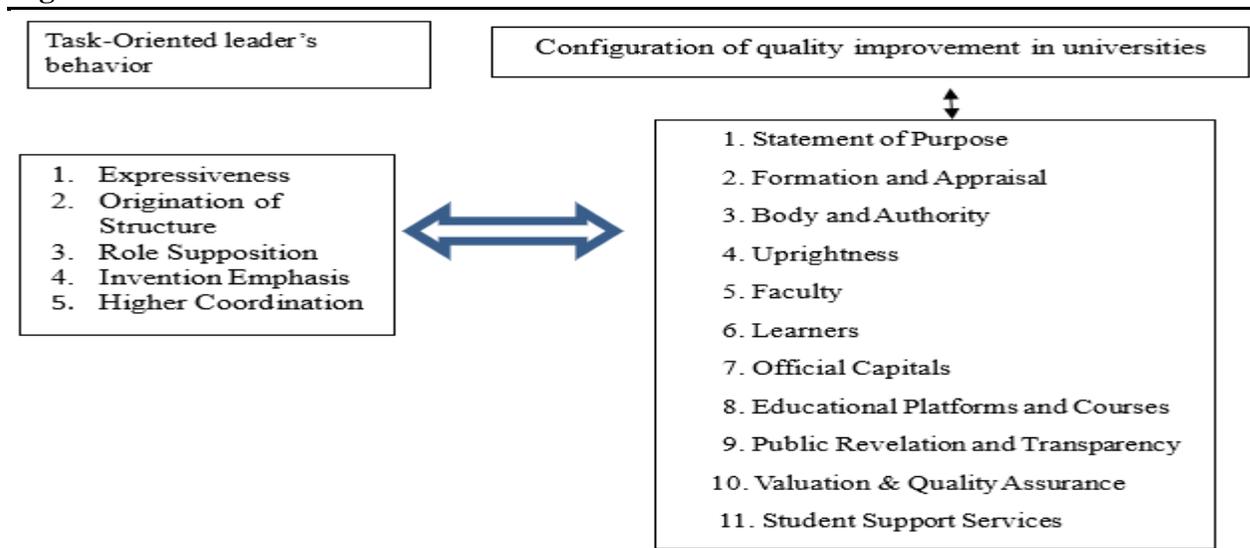
The following were the study's objectives.

- To investigate how the actions of a task-oriented leader provide frameworks for improving the caliber of universities.
- To examine the behavioral differences between task-oriented leaders at public and private universities.
- To classify how public and private universities' quality improvement structures have changed.

Theoretical Framework

This study included the conceptual framework. Eleven standards and five behavioral aspects of task-oriented leaders were used to determine the link between the two variables.

Figure 1: Theoretical framework



Research Methodology

The research was designed using a quantitative and correlational approach. The study's target was to assess the association between the actions of task-oriented leaders and the establishment of a context for quality improvement in higher education. The differences in task-oriented leader behavior between public and private universities were also investigated. The research also sought to determine how the quality improvement structures of public and private universities differed. A stratified cluster sampling approach with many stages was used in this study. The universities were divided into two categories by the researchers: general public universities and general private universities. Information was obtained from department heads, deans of the faculties, and directors of the quality improvement cells at every institution. The researcher first selected 50% of eight universities from the public and eight from the private sectors. In the second stage, a random selection of fifty percent of the heads of departments from public and fifty percent of the heads of departments from private universities was made; in a similar vein, directors of quality improvement cells from multiple institutions were selected as the sample. This study included the conceptual framework of eleven standards and five behavioral aspects of task-oriented leaders were used to determine the link between the two variables.

Table 1: Provides a list of the chosen public and private institutions as well as the participants

General public and private universities were acknowledged by HEC's deans of faculties, department heads, and heads of quality enhancement cells (sample of the study).

| Universities | Faculty Deans | Department Heads | Directors of Quality Enhancement Cells |
|------------------------------|---------------|------------------|--|
| General Public Universities | 57 | 147 | 8 |
| General Private Universities | 57 | 92 | 8 |
| Total | 114 | 239 | 16 |

Table 1 indicates that of the 114 deans of faculties from both public and private institutions recognized by the HEC, 96 deans participated in the survey, accounting for 84.2% of the total. The survey included a sample of 239 heads of departments at HEC approved general public and private institutions. Out of this sample, 215 respondents participated, representing a share of 89.95%. Furthermore, among the 16 leaders of the quality improvement cell, 14 responses accounted for 87.5% of the total.

Findings

The purpose of this assumption was to determine the connection between the behavior of task-oriented leaders and the establishment of a quality improvement system in universities.

H₀₁: The behavior of task-oriented leaders and the initiates structure of quality improvement in universities do not significantly correlate.

The behavior of task-oriented leaders, such as deans of the faculties, and the beginning structure of quality improvement in universities were shown to have a weak positive correlation ($r = .216$)

in table 2. The hypothesis was likewise determined to be rejected with the assistance of $p = .034$ since it was less than the significance threshold (0.05).

The task-oriented leadership style of the department heads and the beginning structure of quality improvement in universities were found to have a perfect (positive) linear connection (0.135). Because the p -value $= .049$ was less than the 0.05 criterion of significance, the hypothesis was rejected.

The task-oriented leadership style of the directors of the quality enhancement cells was shown to have a somewhat favorable association (0.662) with the inception of the quality improvement structure in universities. The hypothesis was rejected since the association was significant at $p = 0.01$, which was less than 0.05 (the significance threshold). The purpose of this hypothesis was to investigate if task-oriented leaders at public and private universities behave differently from one another.

H₀₂: The behavior of task-oriented leaders at public and private universities does not significantly vary in mean.

The following table presents the findings of an analysis of the null hypothesis using an independent sample t-test.

Table 3: A t-test comparing the behavior of task-oriented leaders in public and private universities

| Variables | N | Pearson 'r' | Sig (2-tailed) | | |
|---|----------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Faculty Deans | | | | | |
| Task-oriented leaders' behavior | 96 | .216 | .034 | | |
| Quality improvement in higher education institutions | 96 | | | | |
| Departments' Heads | | | | | |
| Task-oriented leaders' behavior | 215 | .135 | .049 | | |
| Quality improvement in higher education institutions | 215 | | | | |
| Directors of the Quality Enhancement Cells | | | | | |
| Task-oriented leaders' behavior | 16 | .662 | 0.01 | | |
| Quality improvement in higher education institutions | 16 | | | | |
| Respondents | N | Mean | df | t-value | Sig (2-tailed) |
| Task-oriented leaders' Behavior of Public Universities | 184 | 170.54 | 323 | 6.21 | .000 |
| Task-oriented leaders' Behavior of Private Universities | 141 | 156.58 | 283.606 | | |

Table 3 demonstrates that there was a significant difference ($t = 6.21$, $p = 0.00$) in the behavior of task-oriented leaders in public and private universities. The null hypothesis, which stated that there was a significant mean difference between the task-oriented leaders' behavior of public and private universities, was rejected because the mean score of public universities ($M = 170.54$, $SD = 18.847$) was higher than the mean score of private universities ($M = 156.58$, $SD = 20.991$). In order to compare the quality improvement structures of public and private universities, the following hypothesis was taken into consideration.

H₀₃: The configuration of quality improvement in public and private universities does not vary significantly in terms of mean differences.

The results of an independent sample t-test are shown in the table below.

Table 4: Presented the results of a t-test examining the variations in the quality improvement structures of private and public universities.

| Respondents | N | Mean | df | t-value | Sig (2-tailed) |
|--|-----|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Structure of quality improvement in public universities | 184 | 147.054 | 323 | -6.67 | .000 |
| Structure of quality improvement in private universities | 141 | 161.702 | 280.855 | | |

Table 4 demonstrates that, with $t = -6.67$ at $p = 0.000$, there was a significant difference in the quality improvement structure of public and private universities. In comparison to public universities ($M=147.054$, $SD= 17.322$), the mean score of private universities ($M=161.702$, $SD= 19.592$) was greater. According to the analysis, the null hypothesis was disproved. The quality improvement framework at private universities was found to be superior to that in public universities, according to the results.

Findings

Research study provided significant understanding of the connection between task-oriented leadership behaviors and enhancements in quality in universities. The statistical significance of these linkages, despite the relatively modest correlations, emphasizes the importance of task-oriented leadership in improving quality systems, particularly in positions devoted to quality management. These findings highlight the need of an all-encompassing strategy for university leadership development and quality enhancement. Private universities have better quality improvement mechanisms than public universities do. This might suggest that systems for improving quality may be more efficient or stringent at private universities.

Conclusion Remarks

The results of the study demonstrated that task-oriented leadership behaviors are important for raising standards in universities. Furthermore, when it comes to quality improvement frameworks, private university outperform than public universities. These findings demonstrate how important it is for universities to implement thorough leadership development initiatives and more potent frameworks for quality improvement in order to raise institutional standards.

The first hypothesis's conclusion demonstrated a strong positive correlation between the behavior of task-oriented leaders and the establishment of a quality improvement framework in universities. The analysis concluded that the task-oriented leader may be suggested for the improvement of quality in universities as the results supported the theory that these leaders are driven to contribute to raising the caliber of these establishments. It could be advised to base universities' leadership behavior techniques on the behavioral traits of task-oriented leaders. These tactics have the potential to become the cornerstones of quality enrichment connected to human and material resources in postsecondary educational establishments.

This study also exhibited that general public universities and general private colleges differed significantly in the behavior of task-oriented leaders. When compared to general private institutions, general public universities exhibit much more effective task-oriented leadership

practices. The idea that there is no discernible difference in the behavior of task-oriented leaders at general public and private colleges was rejected in light of the data analysis. In comparison to general public colleges, general private institutions were shown to have the least task-oriented leader behavior. It is advised that administrators of both public and private institutions get training under the same guidelines in order for them to support students at all levels of higher education in their professional and moral development without facing any forms of prejudice.

Practical Implications

This research presents a strategic approach for leaders to effectively implement a task-oriented leadership style in order to achieve the intended objectives of universities and address the existing gaps within the higher education systems. The leaders' behavioral patterns must be carefully balanced in order to improve the quality of universities. Leaders should improve their behavior towards subordinates by taking sensible steps, particularly in emerging nations. Leaders use appropriate measures to ensure that policy changes retain consistent quality, taking into account the internal and external factors of the current educational situation. Universities must prioritize the adoption of important measures in order to adapt to changing requirements and remain relevant.

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