Chapter 1
Academic Leadership:
A Case Study of the University of Botswana

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ABSTRACT

Academic Leadership involves managing people in higher education and also elsewhere. Academic leaders could emerge due to their committed and continued pursuit in research; quality assurance; strategies adopted; marketing abilities; contributing education to wider community; developing new programmes and timely reviewing them. The research is aimed at reviewing the literature that exists in this field and to find out the degree or state of academic leadership that exists within the University of Botswana (UB) and how far UB academic leadership has impacted on its vision and mission statement. Primary data was collected through administering a questionnaire within UB on selected five strata of graduate students, academic staff, lower, middle and top management. Respondents were happy with the Academic Leadership in the areas of motivation, professionalism, sense of belonging, building consensus and communication skills.

INTRODUCTION

The style of academic leadership differs from country to country, place to place and also span of time impacts on the academic leadership style. In British Universities Professors are meant to provide academic leadership to junior colleagues as mentors or advisors (Parker & Baporikar, 2013), so is the case at the University of Botswana (UB), it is mandatory that professors are supposed to "provide academic leadership" (UB Guidelines, 2015). As per the findings of Parker & Baporikar (2013, p. 329) it appears that "more than half of the sample [600 out of 1200 questionnaires] respondents stated that they were

not receiving the help and advice that they wanted" from professors. Hence, it is necessary to do further research in each educational institution to establish whether the required academic leadership exists and to find out the degree (style) of academic leadership preferred and the University of Botswana is not an exception. Hence, it is necessary to take up UB as a case study to establish the prevailing academic leadership at UB

The main objective of this research was to have an extensive literature review in the areas of academic leadership in general and particularly in higher educational institutions and to establish if there are gaps in the literature review. The allied objectives were to outline the factors that influenced a person to become a leader in general and academic Leader in particular. Further it was aimed at reviewing the degree (style) of leadership and underlining its achievement of vision, mission of the University of Botswana.

BACKGROUND

There was no evidence of an agreement between various scholars on the definition and understanding of the concept of academic leadership and its application in actual practice. Many scholars had thought that academic leadership was only about academic staff in higher education. It is therefore essential to look into this aspect and understand clearly what academic leadership is and what scholars across the world have assumed and presumed about academic leadership and how academic leadership is appraised. In view of the above preamble, it is necessary to have a quick look at how different scholars across the world have opined about academic leadership and its application. Leadership in general and academic leadership in particular can be seen in an organization or in a country where the organization or a country mentally set for innovation as seen in USA (Harold, 2008) and it is possible where in USA, the retired academic leaders have been forging partnership with community and community colleges (Vocational Training Newsletter, 2001). Further it is identified that academic leadership can be found in the academic library. Sharon et al., (2009) were of opinion that academic leadership is required in human education context for libraries. In UK, it was seen that academic leadership required organizational systems and processes which influenced the leaders' behaviours in practice (Ksenia, 2014). Lee (2001) was of opinion that higher education in Korea prefers hierarchically authoritative leadership as well as preferring autocratic managers to moral managers. He also observed that major characteristics of organizational culture were hierarchically closed system, an age-ranking system, paternalism, masculine dominant culture and academic collectivism based on Confucian ethical values and principles. Chris & Dave (2012) observed that in the country context of Leadership, Asian countries had philosophical views that shaped the norms and pattern of leadership. In the context of a company, leadership differed based on its unique culture whereas in the context of personal competence, leadership was based on the personal traits and predispositions.

Kaibin (2011) in China studied faculty members' perception of preferred academic leadership in Chinese Universities by applying the principles of Confucian philosophy and concluded that the elements such as morality, nurturing, communicating/relating, fairness, and administrative competence played a major role in Chinese academic leadership and further stated that 'the confirmed Chinese view of leadership was consistent with the Confucian philosophy of leadership'. Brazilian academic leadership differed with that of the US. In the US, academics adopted current formal leadership thought critically whereas Brazilian and North American academics 'adopted theories selectively and formulated idiosyncratic approaches' (Anderson et al., 2011). It was further observed that academic leadership of similar positions

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