

Chapter 5

Leadership and Innovative Approaches in Higher Education

Sulaiman Olusegun Atiku

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9364-3774>

University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Richmond Anane-simon

Pentecost University College, Ghana

ABSTRACT

The place of leadership support for technological innovation in advancing quality management in higher education cannot be underrated in the fourth industrial revolution. This chapter examines the role of leadership in higher education and innovative teaching and learning methods for quality assurance in higher education system. The literature review approach and author observation were adopted to cross-examine the influence of leadership on innovative teaching/learning methods and quality assurance in higher education. This chapter shows that leadership support for innovative teaching and learning methods is a benchmark for quality assurance in higher education in recent times. Therefore, no meaningful change will happen in any higher institution without a strong leadership support for innovation and quality management. Policymakers in higher education should create a climate that promotes creativity and innovation by ensuring that transformational leaders are at the helm of affairs for quality management.

INTRODUCTION

The innovations in educational technology is transforming higher education institutions (HEIs) across the globe. This chapter focuses on the current and emerging innovative teaching and learning approaches available for human capital building in the HEIs across the globe. The leadership in higher education could be strategic by adopting ambidextrous approach, which is achievable by simultaneously exploiting current and future opportunities in the industry. For example, rather than being reactive to the current trends, an institution could be proactive in terms of knowledge creation by enhancing its teaching/learning approaches to meet both present and future labour market requirements.

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Many public entities worldwide have correlated higher education reform strategies to the concept of “globalization” which embodies a variety of developments including the intensified integration of national economies, the continuous information technology and the development of Post-Fordism work practices (Heitor & Horta, 2016; Waters & Castells, 1995;1996). A new type of economy had emanated out of this perceived developments, the knowledge economy which led to a drastic shift from material production and manual work in advanced economies (nations). Notwithstanding the wide-ranging contestation over the exact meaning and existence of the term globalization (Hirst & Thompson, 2002), the capacity to compete on a global scene in this context has come to rely on the production of higher value-added products and services. Accordingly, the value-added products and services are dependent on knowledge, especially scientific and technical knowledge and continual innovation. It is obvious that higher education has been strategically placed as a relevant site for the transfer of economically productive knowledge, innovation and technology (Carnoy, 1994).

Leadership effectiveness has a positive influence on organisational efficiency or success, as organizations are not limited by their opportunities but by their leaders (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009). A leadership expert - John Maxwell, puts it that “everyone can steer the ship but it takes the leader to chart the course of the ship” (Maxwell, 2007). Indeed, for higher education to thrive and be highly effective, it would largely be depend on excellent leadership. There are various styles of leadership, which per discretion and for the general benefit of the organization may be adopted to meet organisational goals and objectives. The function of leadership then becomes the creation of systems, structures and environment where interaction and learning can occur (Allen, et al., 1998). In the Twenty-first century, leadership should be seen as learning and doing and not as an opportunity to increase personal aggrandizement. For example, a transformational leader sees a vision, communicate the vision to all stakeholders, estimates costs/benefits of program utility analysis, ensures stakeholders buy-in, and empowers all categories of staff, delegate and champions the transformational agenda.

Incorporating innovative teaching and learning approaches in the higher education requires management support and efforts of visionary leaders (Garrison & Vaughan, 2013). This implies that a transformational leader will exhibits a great level of effectiveness in propagating the benefits of innovative teaching and learning approaches in higher education. The benefits of innovative learning platforms include environmental, technological, pedagogical, psychosocial, and economic benefits (Mata, Lazar, Nedeff, & Lazar, 2013). This chapter examines the relationship between leadership and innovative approaches in human capital formation in higher education systems. This chapter also provides an insight on how innovative teaching and learning methods (e.g. Learning Management Systems) is being used for quality assurance or management in higher education system. By extension, corporate universities and training institutes need to consolidate their teaching and learning approaches with the level of automation and artificial intelligence driving the fourth industrial revolution. The next section provides useful insights on the background of innovative approaches in higher education.

BACKGROUND

The emergence of innovative teaching and learning approaches could be traced back to the evolution of blended learning approaches in higher education (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Garrison & Vaughan, 2013). Garrison and Vaughan (2013) submit that innovative approaches in higher education require clear organisational plans, transformational leadership effectiveness and strong stakeholders’ commitment. With

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