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AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION INTO MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF ACADEMIC LEADERS IN MANAGEMENT COLLEGES

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ABSTRACT

With an increasing number of mushrooming post graduate management institutions, there has been a growing concern on retaining the quality of higher education in India. There have been quite few institutions that have strived hard to attain academic excellence, though most of them still have been struggling to attain it. Among a few successful institutions, Icfai National Colleges were found to establish such kind of an academic excellence with regard to major academic activities, with a sturdy blend of an indispensable academic culture and practices that have actually contributed to the institution's success. This paper highlights some of the exuberant leadership styles practiced and their relationship with regard to overall institutional effectiveness. These leadership styles were studied with regard to eight different academic factors, with the leadership effectiveness being determined for each academic factor. The findings of the present study are an eye-opener for improving conventional academic practices led by other management institutions.

KEVWORDS

Leadership in Higher Education, INC, Transformational leadership.

INTRODUCTION

he National Knowledge Commission (2006) in its report on higher education has clearly stated the future challenges for higher education in India. The report admits the declining academic standards in the Indian higher education. Some of the problems of the Indian higher education include an ungainly affiliating system, inflexible academic structure, eroding autonomy of academic institutions, poor accreditation systems with low coverage and no consequences. Moreover, with the increasing number of private management institutions, higher education in India could only maintain a very small base of quality institutions. In order to determine the effectiveness of the leadership styles at such institutions the present research was undertaken at different private post graduate management institutions.

There has been a significant contribution to leadership in higher education. The relationship between leadership styles and performance in higher education was carried out to find possible correlations; this study explored any relationship between chief enrolment managers (CEMs) with transactional, transformational or laissez faire leadership styles with effective and non-effective annual institutional enrolment performance. The results of this research study did not indicate a statistically significant, positive or negative relation between CEM transactional, transformational, or laissez faire leadership styles and institutional enrolment performance. The implications of this research study were null (Dutschke, 2005). An empirical research evaluated the leadership style of enrolment managers employed at postsecondary institutions in the southern United States. Enrolment management seeks to influence enrolment by analyzing and monitoring the size and characteristics of the student body. Enrolment managers coordinate numerous functions associated with recruiting, retaining, funding, and tracking students. Individuals who supervised both the undergraduate admissions office and student financial aid office were included in the study. Participants completed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5X – Short (Revised), developed by Antonakis et al., (2003), and were categorized as having either transactional leadership style or transformational leadership style (Hughes, 2005).

An examination of leadership styles of head teachers was carried out at public secondary schools with its impact on academic achievement. The study delimited the scope to three leadership styles; autocratic, democratic and laissez faire at secondary level of education. The study used a total of 288 secondary schools and higher secondary schools, and a maximum of 10 secondary teachers and 20 secondary students randomly selected from each school as a sample. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to analyze and find out the value of relationship between leadership style and academic achievement and stepwise regression analysis was used to analyze the differential impact of leadership style and academic achievement. Results of the study concluded that the leadership styles influenced the education process in producing an academic environment. The democratic style showed positive response, followed by autocratic style but the laissez faire style was found to be ineffective (Muhammad et al., 2010).

Foundational descriptive quantitative studies examined leadership styles and traits of higher distance education leaders at the post secondary level. Participants were subjected to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), the questionnaire further assessed leadership outcomes scaled as extra effort, effectiveness and satisfaction. Additional statistical significance established positive correlates between age and effectiveness and a negative correlate was observed between age and active management by exception. Also the level of position in the organization and reporting line of the distance education leader made a difference in the leadership style (Schrenk, 2011).

Another empirical study was conducted on assessment of leadership styles of managers in a selection of state owned enterprises (SOEs) and private enterprises (PEs) which solicited responses from selected managers at different levels. Statistical tools like 'T' test, coefficient of correlation and other descriptive statistics scores have been used to quantify qualitative variables of the leadership styles, performance and satisfaction. Results stated that the level of performance of followers and satisfaction levels of followers and leaders of higher order in PEs than SOEs (Subba Rao et al., 2008).

Research studies have been carried out to investigate preferred leadership style of academics in Malaysian public higher education institutions. Results of the study revealed that respondents indicated high preference for both transactional and transformational leadership styles while laissez faire leadership was the least preferred style (Voon Mung Ling et al., 2009). With regard to ethics and institutionalization a correlational study determining the relationship between leadership styles in higher education and the institutionalization of ethics was conducted. The study included a stratified random sample of 400 from over 11000 employed faculty at institutions of higher education within the University System of Georgia (USG). The results of the study indicated that a relationship existed between leadership styles and ethics institutionalization (Floyd, 2010).

Muhammad et al., (2009) research focused on factors influencing decision making quality of higher education leaders, with the leadership styles, decision styles, managerial processes and competitive intensity relationships. The methodology opted for the study made effective use of the concurrent triangulation strategy with qualitative and quantitative analysis, with two different methods for confirmation, cross validation and corroboration of the findings. The analysis depicted

that the leaders/decision makers who use a hierarchic decision style, transformational leadership style or transactional leadership style will lead to quality decision making.

Distributed Leadership (Gronn, 2002) - is a strongly emergent theme in the educational leadership literature, as well as in the 'official' discourse of the sector, as represented by the National College for School Leadership (Southworth, 2002). It is underpinned by a widespread sense of shared ownership of decisions, based on the exercise of leadership at all levels within the organization, and is reflected in an increasing number of co-ordinator, lead practitioner and education improvement group roles within the teaching staff. Though normative, this model is largely based on school effectiveness and discuses school leadership. The instructional model (Sawbridge, 2000) casts the leader with the primary focus of leadership work being the development of behaviours in teachers that directly influence their relationships with students through planning and delivery of teaching and learning. Although, there were several conceptualizations of the model, the most frequently discussed features include the direct involvement of the principal in developing, co-ordinating and controlling the curriculum.

The conceptualization of instructional leadership – perhaps the most widely found – proposes three elements to the construct namely, defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive learning climate within the school. Implicit in all of these conceptualizations of the model, which is largely schools-based, is the presumption that most head teachers are also ex-teachers themselves and so their own teaching experience and expertise is drawn upon in supporting staff in improving their own practices, and in monitoring the quality and effectiveness of the learning delivery. Instructional leadership reinforces a hierarchical structure, and is often categorized as a kind of transactional leadership (Hallinger, 2000).

Increasing organizational competitiveness and the need for the most effective use of human resources have led writers and researchers to study Transformational Leadership. These writers and researchers argued that transformational leadership is both desirable and necessary in competitive environments, and requires organizations to be capable of fast, radical change and those aspiring to be the best must be able to lead change rather than just follow it (Mullins, 1999).

Though most researchers have made a significant contribution to leadership styles in higher education, there is little evidence of research on leadership styles in post graduate management institutions in India. Moreover, with the nature of problems encountered at professional management institutions in the Indian context, the present study used a method to determine the leadership styles and the leaders' effectiveness with regard to the institutional performance at these professional management institutions in higher education.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

There are different types of universities and colleges in the Indian higher education. The universities are of unitary type with single or multiple campuses or of affiliating type. The concept of an affiliating university is unique to South Asia where colleges affiliate to university. These colleges award the degree of the university to which they are affiliated with. The higher education in India covers all post secondary education beyond class twelve in different disciplines including professional streams that includes engineering and technology, medicine, pharmacy, etc. It comprises of three levels Bachelor's or undergraduate degree programs, Master's or Post graduate degree programs, and Doctoral programs (ICRIER, 2006).

The research on leadership in the Indian higher education has been at its lowest ebb. Therefore, the need to study leadership styles in higher education was considered in the present study. The principles derived from the Transformational leadership (Bass et al., 2005) theory are fundamental to effective leadership and are widely applicable to many segments of life, ranging from work to family to sport, classroom and importantly to issues of social change. Further, with the transformational leadership perspective, this study was specifically undertaken for determining leadership styles at post graduate management colleges with two different clusters (Mackasare, 2010). Another significant reason to conduct the research at such institutions was a sudden growth of professional colleges and institutions after 2000 according to the gross enrolment ratio (GER) as stated in ICRIER (2006). One of the clusters was the Institute of Chartered and Financial Analysts of India, ICFAI National Colleges (INCs), a part of the ICFAI University Dehradun, which was established in the year 2003. A significant reason to carry out the intended study at INCs was their exceptional growth and academic consistency in achieving academic excellence in the past few years. The present paper explored existing leadership styles at 48 INCs in order to understand the leadership effectiveness at these Indian Management institutions and the relationship of the leadership styles with overall institutional effectiveness. Various parameters related to academic leadership in the context of professional management institutions were identified and are based on the lines of qualitative factors with reference to the National Knowledge Commission report (2006) with regard to higher education in India. The effectiveness of leadership styles with relation to some of the important academic factors was studied. It was expected that the conclusion of this study would help in determining the actual leadership effectiveness and its contribution to the institution

METHODOLOGY

The primary data required for the study were obtained by using the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) (Antonakis et al., 2003). The inventory is based on declarative questions with 5 choice Likert scale with responses ranging from "Not at all" - 1, "Sometimes" - 2, "Once in a while" - 3, "fairly often" - 4, "frequently if not always" - 5 (Likert, 1939). This inventory consists of 21 items with 3 questions on a single factor. The respondent is supposed to respond with any one option which suits his/her leadership style.

ACADEMIC FACTORS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (AFPI)

Another schedule was designed on the basis of the issues discussed in the report of the National Knowledge Commission (2006). These data were obtained from secondary sources like institutional websites, University websites, mails, telephonic conversations, and personal interviews, with the concerned administrative personnel and student feedbacks. This inventory used for collecting the secondary data, contained eight items related to academic efficiency. The inventory was used to collect information from individual institutions along with the leader's feedback. For the present study, eight important academic variables viz., number of admissions, number of placements, academic results, student attendance, timely salary payments to faculty and staff, infrastructure, computerization, and faculty to student ratio, were used for calculating the overall organizational performance and the leadership styles associated with each factor. The scores of AFPI for each academic factor considered in the present study have been correlated with the scores of the multifactor leadership questionnaire thus reflecting the leadership style effectiveness with regard to each academic factor.

To find out the coefficient of correlation between the projected leadership styles (scores of MLQ) and academic factors (scores obtained from the AFPI), Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation (r) was used, and for the testing of hypotheses related to the coefficient of correlation the 't' test is used.

CODING BETWEEN MLQ AND BLAKE AND MOUTON'S LEADERSHIP GRID

TABLE 1: AFPI RANGES AND THE CORRESPONDING LEADERSHIP STYLES

Sr.no	Transformational Leadership elements (MLQ)	Leadership grid styles	AFPI Ranges
1	II+IM+IS	Team leadership (9, 9)	80-100 %
2	MBE (A) + CR	Authority-compliance (9, 1)	60-80%
3	IC	Middle of the road (5, 5)	40-60%
4	MBE (P) + LZ	Country Club (1, 9)	20-40%
5	LZ	Impoverished (1, 1)	10-20%

The first three elements of the transformational leadership show a high resemblance with team leadership (9, 9) on the leadership grid (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Since idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation reflect the charismatic attributes of the leaders, the total scores of these elements together was used as the first variable, i.e., (9, 9) leadership style = II + IM +IS. The next best leadership style on the grid was (9, 1) leadership style or the authority-compliance leadership style, with such leaders giving more importance to task and less to people. This was similar to the leadership element of management by exception (A) with contingent reward, since management by exception particularly considers setting priority tasks and accomplishment of the tasks, and rewards for individuals only on the accomplishment of the assigned tasks. Thus, (9, 1) leadership style = scores of MBE (A) + scores of CR. The (5, 5) or

middle of the road leadership shows a 50% concern for tasks and 50% for people. The leadership element individualized consideration was combined with this style of leadership, since it gives priority or pays attention to a few people and the tasks associated with certain individuals and not all of them. Thus, the third variable was formed as (5, 5) leadership style = scores of Individualized consideration.

The (1, 9) leadership also called as country club leadership is known for having a high concern for people and low concern for tasks (Blake & Mouton, 1964). For the same reason it has been associated with MBE (P) management by exception (passive) and the laissez faire element. The MBE (P) reveals about setting important tasks or finding solutions to problems only after encountering with problems without a pre-plan of setting important plans and tasks. The laissez faire element also corresponds to the non-participation of a leader in taking important decisions (Lewin et al., 1939). Hence, the (1, 9) leadership style = scores of MBE (P) + scores of Laissez Faire (Lzf)

The (1, 1) leadership or impoverished leadership shows a low concern for people as well as the tasks. The laissez faire was the only element that could be associated with the impoverished leadership. Thus, the (1, 1) leadership style= scores of Lzf.

SAMPLE SELECTION

The Institute of Chartered and Financial Analysts of India (ICFAI) was established in the year 1984 with only the CFA course in the inception. ICFAI University is a private university recognized by the University Grants Commission under sec 2(f) of the UGC Act 1956. The MBA course was started in the year 1995 in ICFAI Business School (IBS). In the year 2003 ICFAI established 7 ICFAI National Colleges in Andhra Pradesh, India. In a very short span of 3 years ICFAI National Colleges (INCs) were spread across the country with 155 institutions established at different locations in India. As compared to other private management institutions, INCs were found to be more consistent with academic practices, relevance of the syllabi, and the development of industry-academia linkages. These salient features of INCs made it a professional brand and a favourable destination for pursuing professional management education. Since the investigator himself had served as a faculty member in ICFAI Academy, it was quite convenient to collect the data and moreover the academic culture of ICFAI being completely different than other private management institutions, INC was thought to be an ideal sample in the present study. An attempt was made to cover all 155 colleges of Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts Academy. The leadership questionnaire and the AFPI were mailed to the designated Campus Heads, after due permission from the concerned authorities. It was not possible to meet all INC academic leaders personally due to geographical spread, the non-availability of the respondents and paucity of time; therefore the leaders were contacted telephonically as well as through mail.

DATA COLLECTION

All the leaders were provided with the full description of the study under consideration, its scope and purpose. After a constant follow up through telephones and mails, a total of 48 out of 155 respondents provided their feedback. List of different INCs along with the contact persons, emails, phone numbers, and cell phone numbers was obtained from the ICFAI HRIS database. These data were verified with appropriate administrative authorities at the respective INCs. The data were cross checked and verified after an interaction with the administrative authorities and feedback obtained from students at the institutions with regard to number of faculty, percentage of attendance for the third and fourth semesters and results of final semesters thus ensuring the reliability of the data collected.

RESULTS

Out of 48 INCs, only 3 leadership styles with (9, 9), (9, 1) and (5, 5) were observed with regard to different academic activities quoted in the AFPI and the MLQ for each factor, in contrast to another research study of post graduate management institutions where five different leadership styles were practiced. (Mackasare, 2010). It was also noticed that the leadership styles derived from the administration MLQ were independent of leadership practiced with respect to eight different tasks performed at these colleges. Based on the findings of the present study it was observed that all the leadership styles showed a positive relationship with eight academic factors considered in the present study. As per the values obtained from the MLQ and the scores of AFPI, the (9, 9) and (9, 1) leadership styles were found to show a dominance.

The (9, 9) leadership style depicted the leaders' charismatic role in influencing, motivating and intellectually stimulating the team members and staff where all the team members including the faculty, the non-teaching staff and administrative staff had a high level of motivation to perform tasks associated with academic and administrative activities. Another exuberant attribute of the (9, 9) leaders was a perfect delegation of responsibilities to team members who possessed the requisite competencies to perform such tasks. Moreover, it was also evident that the (9, 9) leaders would develop the team members by assigning exigent tasks, thus providing the members with a scope to be more creative in analysing problems and providing effective solutions. The (9, 9) leadership style was effective in developing a proactive attitude within the team members and staff thus, ensuring the successful completion of all academic activities. In the present context the (9, 9) leadership style was found effective with academic factors: admissions, job placements, and student attendance.

SrNo	Academic factors	Coefficent of Correlation (r)	d. f. (n-2)	Calculated t	(t) Table Value	Significance
1	Admissions (9, 9)	0.907	27	11.191	2.052	Significant
2	Placements (9, 9)	0.877	26	9.307	2.056	Significant
3	Results (9, 1)	0.814	22	6.573	2.074	Significant
4	Attendance (9, 9)	0.757	17	4.777	2.110	Significant
5	Payments	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
6	Infrastructure (9, 1)	0.670	26	4.602	2.056	Significant
7	Computerization (9, 1)	0.836	27	7.916	2.052	Significant
8	Faculty: Student (9, 1)	0.808	26	6.993	2.056	Significant

TABLE 2: LEADERSHIP STYLES AND EFFECTIVENESS WITH REGARD TO EIGHT ACADEMIC FACTORS

(Significance at $t > t_0$ 0.05) showing significant relationship between the leadership styles and the academic factors.

1. ADMISSIONS

The term admission refers to the total number of intake of students in an institution. Most private management institutions struggle hard to complete the intake of the allotted management seats, which according the AICTE norms is 60 seats. There have been instances where the seats have been vacant at some management institutions according to another research conducted on private post graduate management institutions (Mackasare, 2010). In case of other private management institutions, the entire admissions process is governed by apex bodies like the AICTE and DTE, where the leaders at institutional level have a negligible role to play. However at INCs the entire admissions process was handled in a different manner. INCs were found to excel in the completion of 100 percent admissions at these institutes. After having explored the reasons for such an accomplishment it was found that these team leaders were extremely motivating with good interpersonal communication and dexterity among the team members and faculty. Another peculiar feature was observed in these institutes, all these institutes had a separate marketing team for actualizing 100 percent admissions. INC was found to have marketing and brand building executives who were responsible in generating admissions by counselling graduates.

Several faculty members were found to conduct brand development activities with topics like 'Career Planning', 'Personality Development', 'Stress Management', 'Presentation skills', 'Interview skills' at different UG colleges in the vicinity which even included some engineering colleges. One of the respondents also conducted a faculty development workshop on for UG faculty. More importantly, at all INC's, a merit rating system has been implemented where the individual colleges take special efforts right from admissions to recruitment of faculty. The most striking feature in INC admission procedures was selecting students with a meritorious record, with this regard INC has developed merit scholarships with fee concessions as follows: ≥60% to 70% for male students, >70% male students with 50% of fees, > 70% female students with 60% of the fees.

INC has also designed a lucrative incentive system for the first 100 admissions; this incentive system has been a good motivator for the INC team members to contribute to 100% admissions at individual institutions. This clearly shows the effort of the academic leaders with regard to admissions and proves that there is a significant relationship between leadership at the institutional level and the admission process at the respective colleges. The (9, 9) leadership style shows

high concern for people and high concern for task as well, the leadership elements associated with this leadership style i.e., idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation clearly elucidated the charismatic traits of the (9, 9) leaders at INC management colleges with regard to the admissions. Moreover, it was also observed that all the (9, 9) leaders were able to create an environment where, there has been more positive reinforcement to the team members for successful accomplishments of all tasks related to the admission process. Though, there have been adequate admissions at other private management institutions yet, the procedure for handling all admissions related activities was quite unique in INC. To a great extent INC had developed a unique academic culture which was found favourable with the leadership at these institutions which clearly shows the difference between other private management institutions and INC with regard to admissions.

2. JOB PLACEMENTS

A major challenge for most private management institutions in the Indian context is the employability of students in the best industry with good pay packages before completion of the MBA program. The placement program at INC has been uniquely designed for all INCs across different states. The placements have been categorized at three different levels

- a. **NATIONAL LEVEL:** At INC head quarters Hyderabad, some of the best students who have surpassed the highest benchmarks from different INC institutes, qualify at the national level. All the students from this group have had the best lucrative pay packages. It is quite obvious that only those students with a high aptitude, sound conceptual knowledge and a consistent academic record had qualified for national level placements. INC proudly announced their names with the details of the company and the package they obtain on their all India web site, as well as the individual institutional placement brochure. Generally, 10% from all India INCs qualify for this level since it has been regarded to have the toughest standards.
- b. **Regional Level:** Regional placements are targeted at metros/cosmos and district places. INC has its regional offices in different states; which have a systematized data of students comprising of academic consistency, Summer Internship Program (SIP) with details of the on-the-job training and achievements, Management Thesis, as well as the GD/PI scores during campus interviews. Thus, the performance of students is observed from time to time and depending on the progress that the student exhibits he/she gets selected at this particular level. The regional level placements were found to contribute 60% of the total students from various INC institutes in different states.
- c. **Local Level:** Local level placements are aimed at students who are average and above average level and also for few girl/lady students who were not allowed by their parents to go to metro cities are accommodated at this level. When enquired about the success of local placements, it was revealed by one of the regional heads, that individual INCs have been establishing industry-institute interfaces with diversified industries at district level. The local level placement attributes for 10-30% of the remaining students from different INCs.

The (9, 9) leadership style was found to be inspirational, influential and motivating for all the team members associated with the tasks of placements. There has been an inbuilt lucrative reward/incentive system for faculty, marketing executives, and even the administrative personnel for accomplishments of all the tasks associated with placements. It has been observed that many educational institutions at higher education stand in isolation from the society and service sectors. As a matter of fact they are actually supposed to strive hard for significant connections with the user-agencies in their locality or elsewhere. INCs have been successful in establishing local industry contacts and linkages through summer internship programs and student placements in such industries. It would be even a better option to involve the industries in designing the course curriculum and structure. In order to help the learners gain practical corporate exposure, all INCs have identified opportunities with short term and long term assignments or live projects and on-the-job training. These efforts have not only developed practical insights within students but also developed a rapport and helped substantially in placements.

Thus, with an excellent merit based system, INC has taken care of placing all the students either at the national, regional or local level, which actually happens to be the reason for 100% placements at all these institutions. All the (9, 9) leaders of INC were found to play a significant role by developing contacts with such employers or professional organizations giving the learners a significant opportunity to learn and develop.

3. ATTENDANCE

There has been a growing concern for student attendance in the Indian higher education, especially at private management institutes showing a declining attendance trend at the IIIrd and IVth semesters of the MBA course. Though, the minimum statutory eligibility for attending the examination is 75%, yet it has been observed that neither the students nor the private management colleges take cognizance of this fact. In most of the colleges majority of the students do not attend lectures but are declared eligible for appearing examinations. This further deteriorates not only the students standards but the colleges' as well.

In order to understand what best practices do academic leaders resort to in order to maintain 100% attendance, this particular factor of student attendance was also considered with regard to the leadership at institutional level. It was interesting to observe what (9, 9) leaders did at their institutions in order to maintain the attendance standards at their institutions. The (9, 9) leaders were often found to upgrade their existing academic system and were also found to make consistent improvements in the qualitative aspect of education by giving appropriate training to the faculty in different domains. There was a collaborative teaching-learning process developed at these centres where the faculty was found to correlate the concepts and cases with his subjects. The delivery of the academic content and the subject matter was more refined and fine-tuned where one could call this as achieving academic excellence. This method of the (9, 9) leaders can be considered to be an innovative approach towards achieving academic excellence, where there has been constant benchmarking and upgrading of the academic system. Students at the institutions are found to learn maximum with greater practical insights and were found quite enthused in attending the lectures with significant less absenteeism. It was also observed that one such respondent did not allow 41 students out of a total of 104 students to attend examinations for subjects with low attendance at one of the INCs, owing to poor attendance in the first semester. Such kind of a practice was usually undertaken in the first semester, which was like a warning for students showing negligence with regard to the attendance standards. The (9, 9) leaders clearly communicated the disadvantages of non-compliance of the minimum attendance criteria, that would have an instant impact on the placements of such students. This clearly shows the uncompromised academic standards with regard to student attendance at INCs.

The (9, 1) leadership style reflects two important leadership elements, management by exception (active) MBE (A) and contingent reward (CR). A major difference between (9, 9) and (9, 1) leadership style is the degree and magnitude of monitoring and controlling people and tasks. The (9, 1) leadership style considers setting priority tasks and evaluation of the accomplishments of these tasks. Further, (9, 1) leaders would only reward the team members on successful completion of the allotted tasks. An element of stringency is reflected from the (9, 1) leadership style with a primary focus on strict compliance of delegated responsibilities which is not observed with the (9, 9) leadership style. Though, even the (9, 1) leadership style showed a significant positive relation with academic factors: computerization, attendance, infrastructure and faculty: student ratio in the present study.

4. COMPUTERIZATION

The term computerization refers to the technological advancements with introduction of digital libraries, e-learning methodologies with a well built commercial or internal/inbuilt reforming and governance system catering to the higher educational needs of the institutions. The track record of such use of sophisticated MIS packages for improving the governance at the private higher education institutions has been poor (ICRIER, 2006) pp115. However, it was observed that at INC has an excellent online centralized computerized packages for accounts, infrastructural facilities and asset management, weekly academic monitoring system and a human resource information system, examination (internal and external assessment) and results information system for with regard to the institutional governance. For improving the institutional governance, INC had a bouquet of such inbuilt online reporting systems like

- a. **Weekly Academic Monitoring Systems (WAMS):** An online reporting system giving the requisite details of weekly session plans for all the subjects, syllabus covered subject-wise student attendance, guest lectures, internal and external evaluation, faculty development workshops, industry-institution interaction and other important academic activities.
- b. **Summer Internship Program (SIP):** The most inimitable and distinguishing program devised by INC, which has tenure of 4 months for the summer interns in contrast to 50 days summer training in all Indian universities affiliated colleges. The program was deliberately undertaken only at metropolitan cities, to give a good exposure to students from district and rural places. Another feature of this program is that, it is a perfect blend of on-the-job training (OJT) as well as research (management thesis). Students have a definite marketing target with stipulations which were closely monitored by the company guides and faculty guides on weekly basis. There has been a good interaction between the faculty guides and company guides with regard to the progress of every

student. The SIP portal is an online reporting system ensuring regular attendance of students and the details of on-the-job accomplishments of students. This system helped the students to be placed after completion of the second year. During internship students are found to be more confident, with an overall developed personality, eventually increasing their chances of employability. Most of them were found to have a pre-placement offer (PPOs) which is the greatest takeaway for INCs.

- c. **Examination portal:** Another online reporting system, through which details of the students internals and externals are compiled by the academic coordinators of all the INCs and all the necessary compliances were found to be done on semester basis. The examination at INCs was found to be a multiple choice question (MCQs) format, where the qualitative aspect is considered, unlike other conventional Indian university theory pattern which focuses more on the descriptive aspect. Such kind of an objective exam was found to be more reliable and applied than the conventional theory examinations. A proper record of maintenance of student academics and result analysis was possible with such a reporting system.
- d. Accounts and Asset Management System: It has been a practice in most of the private management institutions to manipulate and show different records of asset management when additional courses/seats are requested to regulatory authorities and scrutiny committees from the AICTE, University or NAAC. By doing this, such institutions increase the number of intake and get sanction however; the infrastructure and facilities remain unaltered. In contrast to this, at INCs there has been an online asset management system portal which contains a record of all the assets, and there is a periodic review of the assets distributed across various INCs. Along with the administrative authorities even the faculty is one of the asset management team members for audit and maintenance of assets.
- e. **HRIS:** A centralised Human Resource Information System gives details of employees starting from recruitment to exit interview, payslips, benefits, mediclaim, performance appraisal and Income Tax investment information.

5. ACADEMIC RESULTS

The term results refer to the passing or failure percentage of students in the final semesters. The assessment of students is considered to be another important academic factor with different internal and external evaluation components as per the methodology which has been the same in most of the private management institutions. There have been many questions with regard to the reliability of these methods for courses in different disciplines.

The (9, 1) leadership style was found to be significant with regard to the results factor at INCs, with the leadership elements of management by exception (A) and contingent reward as far as monitoring and controlling the academic results was concerned. The directors of these colleges were found to be very prompt on displaying the academic performance of every student regularly and influencing the students sentient about their deficiency in the concerned subjects. The (9, 1) leaders also designed mentoring programs for students at their institutions, where each faculty member had the responsibility of 10-12 students, which shows the involvement of the faculty in the overall development of the students thus, making everyone employable. An interesting thing to be noted was that, the academic leaders addressed all the students on a weekly or a fortnightly basis on the agenda of improvement on academic grounds; proper counselling was done for students requiring a special attention with regard to some subjects. Wherever required the academic leaders called for experts from the industry by giving the best of their efforts for improving the subject knowledge of the students. At all INCs, it was mandatory to conduct guest lectures from industry every week for bestowing them with requisite practical insights at corporate world. The students at INC were made to realize that their academic consistency was a matter of concern when it comes to placing them into organizations. As a result of which, the examinations and internal assessments were undertaken seriously by all the students. The academic performance of the students already placed was found to be displayed on the notice boards with the overall and aggregate CGPA, and the companies they have been placed along with the salary package details.

Examination assessment units have been established to have regular brainstorming for formulation of schemes, question banks, with a consistent and a standard percentage of internal and external evaluation and declaration of results. At INC, examinations are very innovatively formulated consisting of computer assisted assignments based on objective type questions, applied theory questions, numerical problems, case-lets and case studies. With such reliable standards of evaluation, students have been found to be competent to grab the best of opportunities with good pay packages which clearly shows a linkage with performance of the students.

Moreover, the assessment systems and evaluation patterns in majority of the private institutions have been theoretical in nature, usually in the form of descriptive tests. However, at INC there exists special examination assessment unit which ensures appropriate assessment of students with multiple choice questions. The internal evaluation components of students were in terms of live projects, seminars on the latest topics, group activity and presentations. This scheme also envisages faculty members in colleges to decide the curriculum and conduct the evaluation of the students with more internal evaluation.

This also proves the initiatives undertaken by the (9, 1) leaders showing significance with the results parameter as one of the key academic factors in the present study.

6. INFRASTRUCTURE

The (9, 1) leadership style is associated with the leadership elements of management by exception and contingent rewards, which proves that these leaders have had a very high concern for tasks and the compliance of important academic tasks. The monitoring of utility of different resources and equipments like computers and e-labs and all the essential physical assets was recorded and maintained by the administrative personnel at individual institutional level. At some institutions along with the administrative staff even the faculty members were given a responsibility of monthly maintenance and audit of infrastructural facilities. As compared to (9, 9) leaders (9, 1) leaders were found to be better in terms of maintenance of important assets at the institutions, all (9, 1) leaders strictly followed the monthly internal audit processes and keep a track of the utility of important resources and equipments, which shows that (9, 1) leaders were good at maintaining the assets. The (9, 1) leaders were found to be good at availing and setting of new infrastructure mainly in the form of the standards that they were found to maintain with regard to adequate classrooms, libraries, seminar rooms, auditoriums.

7. FACULTY: STUDENT RATIO

There has been a very serious concern for retaining talented faculty members at private management institutions. Faculty shortages have been one of the prominent problems either because of non-availability of suitable qualified persons or arising out of other financial reasons. Hence, faculty to student ratio of 1:15 is not observed in many private management institutions. At many private management institutions this parameter is not given due importance and is not treated as a very serious issue. On the other hand, at all INCs the recruitment of the faculty had been on a merit as well based on the industrial experience, the development of faculty also takes place from time to time with FDP's and workshops at appropriate time intervals. The appraisal of faculty was done on an annual basis based on the number of academic responsibilities handled, progress in research work and intellectual capital, where the incentives and pay packages the faculty members receive are commensurate with experience and on-the-job performance.

The (9, 1) leadership style showed a positive response in maintaining and controlling the standard faculty: student ratio which is 1:15 as per the AICTE norms. The practice of collaborative learning methodologies developed at most of the INC's encouraged the faculty members to study and understand the subject domains apart from the ones they were specialized in, the (9, 1) leaders recruited faculty members on a merit basis where the faculty members did find an incentive to learn and grow at the institutional level. All the (9, 1) leaders were successful in creating good loyal employees at the institutions.

8. SALARY /MONTHLY PAYMENTS

There have been 155 INCs across different states in India. All these institutes have been very prompt with regard to the payments of the faculty across different regions. The recruitment of the entire faculty staff has been done on a merit basis, initially during the first year it was difficult to get qualified faculty however, subsequently due to more payments and the brand itself, qualified faculty members were attracted and retained within INCs. At INC the salary of the entire faculty, non-teaching staff would be deposited on 30th/31st of every month very promptly with online payslips generated on the web based applications that INC had designed for each employee with a unique ID and password. In case, if there happens to be a holiday or a Sunday on any of the 30th, the salary would be deposited one day in advance. This promptness was seen at all INCs. Therefore leadership style with regard to this particular factor of payments did not matter, since every leader was a part of this system and there was no relation of payments and the INC leaders at individual institutes.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of the present study it was observed from the leadership questionnaire values and the AFPI scores that there were two dominant leadership styles the (9, 9) and (9, 1). The (9, 9) leadership style was found to be favourable with academic factors admissions, job placements and attendance. The (9, 1) leadership style showed a positive response with academic factors like computerization, infrastructure, academic results and the faculty: student ratio. With the salary/payments factor at INCs, it was observed that the salary of the entire faculty, non-teaching staff would be deposited on 30th/31st of every month very promptly with online payslips generated on the web based applications. There was never any delay with regard to the monthly payments at all INCs. All academic activities from student admissions to recruitment of faculty were done on a merit basis. The placement program was categorized at 3 different levels with National Regional and Local level which was effective in placing not only the intelligent students but also the average and above average students with 100% placements at all INCs. The internal evaluation pattern was based on the case-studies, seminars, presentations, on-the-job training assignments with no scope for the students to show absenteeism, ensuring more than 90% of attendance with good results. All INCs had adequate infrastructure with modern teaching aids and equipments at all the institutes. As regards computerization for improving the institutional governance, INC had a bouquet of such inbuilt online reporting systems with weekly academic monitoring systems (WAMS), summer internship program (SIP), examination portal, accounts as well as asset management system and an HRIS which gave details of employees starting from recruitment to exit interviews, payslips, benefits, mediclaim, and Income Tax investment information. INCs have motivated and dedicated faculty members who undergo one month rigorous induction program on teaching methodology, and are apprised period

In India, the prevailing bureaucratic structure in the higher education system has been a primary impediment in the delivery of quality higher education. This bureaucratic system has restricted the growth and expansion of private institutions which are more promising and intended to deliver professional higher education. On the contrary, it has been observed that there are many institutions that are actually not complying with regulatory standards, with inadequate infrastructure, poor faculty-student ratios, yet are running smoothly. Moreover with political interventions in the system, this has led to the further deterioration of the quality of education. Many such institutions have the sheer intention of making profits rather than focusing on the enrichment of quality higher education. In short there has been a serious concern with regard to standardization in higher education. Many of the private institutions affiliated to universities have a conventional system, with a little or no change in the syllabus with lot of obsolete concepts; these institutions are also found to be isolated from the industry and society by and large.

In case of politically led institutions, the recruitment of administrative staff and faculty is done on an influential basis (from their own constituencies) and not on merit. Even the percentage of qualified directors at such management institutions has been low. There are many directors who are not qualified but still functioning with the said designation. Same is the case with faculty, most of the faculty do not possess doctoral qualification yet they are continued on the same pay scales. Despite explicit AICTE norms such institutions are functioning and flourishing whereas institutions like INCs with a merit based system, right from recruitment of faculty to compliances related to other important administrative and academic activities like admissions, placements, monitoring of attendance, close tie-up and linkages with industry, adequate infrastructure, huge number of consultancy projects, and a relevant syllabus (with regard to the job market) with a keen intention of nurturing professionalism amongst students and major contributors in increasing the student employability, have to suffer on bureaucratic grounds of the higher education system in India. INCs became a victim of this bureaucratic system prevailing in higher education, where the Madras High court restricted INCs to conduct further admissions.

Mackasare and Arvindekar (unpublished) study is an eye-opener for conventional private management institutions in the Indian higher education. With the present picture of private management institutions there is a need to simplify academic and administrative practices like the regularity of conducting internal audits, degree of computerization and procedures for timely and speedy curricula revision and introduction of new courses. There is a need to review and revisit the statutory provisions in this regard. Greater autonomy should be given to colleges to initiate curricula changes with checks and balances through supervision by expert and professional bodies.

The performance criteria for appraising faculty members' needs to be customized on the basis of scholarly articles and research work, within National/International journal publications, which at present is rarely seen among private management institutions. Faculty can be motivated by lucrative rewards for pursuing research and consultancy along with the teaching, academic and administrative responsibilities.

There is a need to develop a merit based system with regard to the faculty recruitment process, where only qualified and competent faculty should be given an opportunity with a constant periodic review of the progress. Even the placement program at management colleges needs to be designed on a merit basis which caters the employment need of not just the intelligent students but also average students. The incorporation of a soft-skills laboratory should be mandatory where proper grooming of students with a constant review of the student progress from semester –I to semester IV must be constantly monitored.

The existing dilapidated examination system with gullible learning needs to be revamped with the inclusion of incessant examination reforms focusing more on problem solving and analysis rather than the conventional descriptive tests. Like wise even the internal evaluation pattern should be revived with a greater focus given to presentations on live projects in the industry, seminars, paper presentations, general awareness quiz sessions, thematic tests. The external evaluation should be developed with grade systems with objective based questions on an analytical nature than the theoretical pattern.

The basic infrastructural facilities were found to be fulfilled with majority of the management institutions, however after taking into consideration the number of actual programs/additional intake, the infrastructure appeared to be inadequate with the actual number of programs being run by institutions. Hereby a computerized asset management system needs to be developed, which can further be linked to statutory authorities for effective monitoring and controlling. Based on the findings of the present study it is suggested that a full-fledged computerized management support system should be monitored at the university level where all the affiliated colleges would be connected centrally with proper reporting and accountability, with a consistency in performing different academic activities, like the factors considered in the present study. Proper systems catering to the compliance of different academic activities should be brought into action which includes the details of weekly session plans, syllabus covered, weekly attendance, value addition including guest lectures and events organized during the week. An online portal can be developed to fulfil the requirements of the summer internship projects that actually monitor the student progress with a special regard to research as well as other on-the-job activities. An HRIS database can also be developed to include the information of all employees, job descriptions, and records from employee recruitment to the exit interviews, leave benefits, performance appraisal, gratuity, medi-claim, income tax and investment information. With an effective use of management support systems (MSS) management institutions can ensure timely academic task compliances

The study could have been extended to the primary and secondary institutions however it was not relevant in the higher education context, considering important academic factors included in the present study. In comparison to the sample size in the present study, findings could have been verified on a larger database. The present study has helped the researcher to study leadership styles at professional higher management educational system, and hence the design of the research instruments will suit only in the higher education environment. However with the inclusion of other factors, these inventories can be used in other industries and institutions with a proper alteration of the present factors. The emotional intelligence factor can also be studied with regard to leadership in higher education on similar lines. The present study can also be expanded globally with the inclusion of foreign universities with a comparative analysis of the Indian and foreign universities which would help in designing a gap-fit analysis mechanism, eliminating the existing flaws in the current higher educational system.

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with transparency and accountability.

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