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LEADERSHIP QUALITY PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF AUTONOMOUS POLYTECHNIC COLLEGES IN TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

The leadership in educational institutions is widely recognized as having crucial importance for performance. There is a strong association between leadership quality practices and performance of the educational institutions. The students of autonomous polytechnic colleges have been selected by adopting random sampling and the data and information have been collected from 200 faculties and pertain to the year 2010-2011. The foregoing analysis shows that the results show that about 70.50 per cent of students are males while the rest of 29.50 per cent of students are females. The results indicate that about 73.50 per cent of students of autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu belong to the age group of 16-17 years and about 27.00 per cent of students belong to the Mechanical followed by Electrical and Electronics (23.00 per cent), Electronics and Communication (21.00 per cent), Civil (16.50 per cent) and Computer Science engineering (12.50 per cent). The student's satisfaction, faculty's satisfaction, service to the students and environment and safety discriminate best among five branches of the students in autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu. The correlation analysis indicates that there is a meaningful positive and strong correlation between leadership quality practices and performance results in autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu. Leaders in polytechnic colleges often have a space of action where it is possible to influence the inhibiting structures. In polytechnic colleges, which is characterized by internal responsiveness, the leaders are sensitive to the needs of the faculties and students and will change regulation when necessary and possible, in order to achieve the higher academic performance.

KEYWORDS

Correlation, Discriminant, Leadership, Performance.

INTRODUCTION

The leadership in educational institutions is widely recognized as having crucial importance for performance. Indeed, it is acknowledged as being second only to classroom teaching in terms of its influence on student learning with the greatest impact found in institutions where students' learning needs are the most acute. There is a wide range of issues relating to supporting and promoting the provision of effective leadership in educational institutions, including those around recruitment, roles and responsibilities, retention, succession planning, governance, continuing professional development and reward.

Leaders often have a space of action where it is possible to influence the inhibiting structures of educational institutions. In an educational institution, which is characterized by internal responsiveness, the leaders are sensitive to the needs of the teachers and will change regulation when necessary and possible, in order to support and promote development. This requires measures where leaders develop their habits to listen to experiences made by teachers. This is important for all the efforts made by individual academic teachers to reach their full potential in terms of collaboration and mutual support.

The way in which successful leaders apply leadership quality practices will be influenced by a number of factors, including their judgments about the conditions for teaching and learning in the institutions, the confidence and experience of their staff; and the behaviour, aspirations and attainment levels of the students. There is a strong association between leadership quality practices and performance of the educational institutions. The role of leaders in polytechnic educational institutions has changed in recent years, becoming increasingly complex and demanding. Polytechnic institutions are becoming more autonomous and are facing higher levels of accountability, while serving more diverse stakeholders and being confronted with a broad range of social issues. The polytechnic educational institutional leaders will require a broad range of skills and qualities in order to effectively discharge the roles and responsibilities in leading the polytechnic institutions.

The successful leadership quality practices improve students' outcomes through their values, virtues, dispositions, attributes and competences as well as what they do in terms of the strategies they select and the ways in which they adapt their leadership practices to their unique context in order to achieve the excellent performance. With this background, the present study was made to examine the leadership quality practices and performance of autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu.

METHODOLOGY

Among the polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu, the autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu have been purposively selected for the present study. The students of autonomous polytechnic colleges have been selected by adopting random sampling technique through pre-tested, structured interview schedule through direct interview method. The data and information have been collected from 200 students and pertain to the year 2010-2011.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

The frequency and percentage analyses were carried out to understand the characteristics of students. The correlation analysis has been carried out to examine the relationship between leadership quality practices and performance of autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu. In order to discriminate the branches of the students in autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu based on the performance results, the discriminant analysis has been applied and the functional form of discriminant function is:

$$D = b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + \dots + b_n X_n + c$$

Where,

D = Discriminant (dependent) Variable (Branches)

X_i = Discriminating (independent) Variables (Performance Results)

b_i = Discriminant coefficients;

c = Constant

The Likert five point scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) was used to measure the variables of leadership direction, organizational governance, organizational performance reviews, social responsibility and ethics, students focused results, faculty focused results, Institutional Effectiveness results, Governance and social responsibility results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS

The characteristics of students in autonomous polytechnic colleges were analyzed and the results are presented in **Table 1**. The results show that the results show that about 70.50 per cent of students are males while the rest of 29.50 per cent of students are females. The results indicate that about 73.50 per cent of students of autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu belong to the age group of 16-17 years followed by 18-19 years (18.50 per cent) and 20-21 years (8.00 per cent). It is clear that about 27.00 per cent of students belong to the Mechanical followed by Electrical and Electronics (23.00 per cent), Electronics and Communication (21.00 per cent), Civil (16.50 per cent) and Computer Science engineering (12.50 per cent).

TABLE – 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS IN AUTONOMOUS POLYTECHNIC COLLEGES IN TAMIL NADU

Variables with Category	Households(N=200)		Variables with Category	Households(N=200)	
	Number	Per Cent		Number	Per Cent
Gender			Branches		
Male	141	70.50	Civil	33	16.50
Female	59	29.50	Mechanical	54	27.00
Age(Years)			Electronics and Communication	42	21.00
16-17	147	73.50	Electrical and Electronics	46	23.00
18-19	37	18.50	Computer Science	25	12.50
20-21	16	8.00			

DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS FOR PERFORMANCE RESULTS

In order to discriminate the branches of the students in autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu based on the performance results, the discriminant analysis has been applied and the results are hereunder discussed.

SELECTION OF DISCRIMINATING VARIABLES

In order to determine the performance results which significantly contribute to the differentiation of branches of students in autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu, F test is used for Wilks' Lambda. The ANOVA results are presented in **Table 2**. The F test is significant for six variables of student's satisfaction, loyalty of students, faculty's satisfaction, service to the students, improvement of students and environment and safety.

ESTIMATION OF DISCRIMINANT FUNCTION

In this study, the discriminant analysis is carried out for five branches of the students in autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu in and it results four discriminant functions and consequently four eigen values and the results are presented in **Table 3**. The highest value (0.68) corresponds to the first discriminant function, which shows that it has the strongest power of discrimination of the four functions. Also, the first function accounts in a ratio of 65.30 per cent for the dispersion of the group means, as compared to the second function accounts 14.70 per cent, third function contributes 12.50 per cent and fourth function accounts 7.30 per cent.

The canonical correlation coefficient, measuring the relation between discriminant factorial coordinates and the grouping variable show that 71.57 i.e (0.846)² of the total variance accounts for the differences among for five branches of the students in autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu through the first discriminant function.

TABLE – 2: TESTS OF EQUALITY OF GROUP MEANS

Performance Results	Wilks' Lambda	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Student's satisfaction	.946	8.460	2	194	.021
Loyalty of students	.916	9.192	2	194	.023
Faculty's satisfaction	.960	5.964	2	194	.015
Loyalty of faculties	.924	2.182	2	194	.124
Service to the students	.922	7.846	2	194	.030
Improvement of students	.943	7.178	2	194	.025
Utilization of funds	.973	1.280	2	194	.174
Rules and regulations	.962	1.273	2	194	.156
Code of conduct	.956	1.284	2	194	.121
Environment and safety	.924	5.862	2	194	.023

TABLE – 3: EIGEN VALUES

Function	Eigen Value	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Canonical Correlation
1	.684	65.50	65.50	.846
2	.348	14.70	80.20	.426
3	.282	12.50	92.70	.328
4	.198	7.30	100.00	.243

STANDARDIZED CANONICAL DISCRIMINANT FUNCTION COEFFICIENTS

The standardized coefficients for the discriminant function were calculated and the results are presented in **Table 4**. The discriminant function coefficients are used for calculating the discriminant score for each case in particular.

Taking into the account that the first function has the highest discriminating power, the first discriminant function is:

$$Z = 0.462 Z_1 - 0.124 Z_2 + 0.381 Z_3 + 0.112 Z_4 + 0.424 Z_5 + 0.122 Z_6 - 0.142 Z_7 - 0.143 Z_8 - 0.201 Z_9 + 0.396 Z_{10}$$

The Z₁ to Z₁₀ are standardized X₁ to X₁₀ variables.

TABLE – 4: STANDARDIZED CANONICAL DISCRIMINANT FUNCTION COEFFICIENTS

Performance Results	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3	Function 4
Student's satisfaction	.462	-.112	.144	-.103
Loyalty of students	-.124	-.284	-.142	-.147
Faculty's satisfaction	.381	.115	.202	.115
Loyalty of faculties	.112	.298	.392	.192
Service to the students	.424	.134	.114	.101
Improvement of students	.122	.222	.325	.420
Utilization of funds	-.142	-.262	-.363	-.128
Rules and regulations	-.146	-.210	-.110	-.213
Code of conduct	-.201	.245	.189	.245
Environment and safety	.396	-.164	-.264	-0.127

The size of the coefficients indicates of student's satisfaction, faculty's satisfaction, service to the students and environment and safety discriminate best among five branches of the students in autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu.

STRUCTURE MATRIX

The structure matrix coefficients are presented in Table 5. From the table, the results indicate the correlation between each predictor measures and the discriminant function.

TABLE – 5: STRUCTURE MATRIX

Performance Results	Function			
	1	2	3	4
Student's satisfaction	-.546*	.246	-.189	.011
Faculty's satisfaction	.504*	-.236	.172	.023
Service to the students	.482*	.284	.168	.171
Environment and safety	-.162	.432*	-.228	.182
Rules and regulations	.148	-.446*	-.198	.154
Code of conduct	-.124	.408*	.164	.128
Loyalty of students	-.180	.164	-.342*	.111
Utilization of funds	-.075	-.182	.284*	.124
Improvement of students	-.064	.172	-.112	-.353*
Loyalty of faculties	.015	-.126	-.146	-.296*

Note: * indicates largest absolute correlation between measure and discriminant function

For the first discriminant function, it can be seen that correlation coefficients have high values for three measures viz., student's satisfaction, faculty's satisfaction and service to the students which means that these measures are strongly correlated with the first function. These measures would probably characterize best division of branches of students in autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu.

For the second function, environment and safety, rules and regulations and code of conduct are strongly correlated. These measures would also probably characterize best division of branches. For the third function, loyalty of students and utilization of funds are strongly correlated and these measures would also probably characterize best division of branches. For the fourth function, improvement of students and loyalty of faculties are strongly correlated and these measures would also probably characterize best division of branches of students in autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu.

EFFICIENCY OF DISCRIMINANT FUNCTION

The efficiency of discriminate function is presented in Table 6. Based on the discriminant function, 78.00 per cent of the measures have been correctly classified.

TABLE – 6: EFFICIENCY OF DISCRIMINANT FUNCTION

Branches	Predicted Group Membership					Total
	Civil	Mechanical	Electronics and Communication	Electrical and Electronics	Computer Science	
Count						
Civil	24	2	3	2	2	33
Mechanical	3	42	4	3	2	54
Electronics and Communication	2	1	35	2	2	42
Electrical and Electronics	2	3	2	37	2	46
Computer Science	1	2	2	2	18	25
%						
Civil	72.73	6.06	9.09	6.06	6.06	100.00
Mechanical	5.56	77.78	7.40	5.56	3.70	100.00
Electronics and Communication	4.76	2.38	83.34	4.76	4.76	100.00
Electrical and Electronics	4.35	6.52	4.35	80.43	4.35	100.00
Computer Science	4.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	72.00	100.00

Note: 78.00 % of original grouped cases correctly classified

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP QUALITY PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE RESULTS

The relationship between leadership quality practices and performance results of autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu was analyzed by working out correlation coefficients and the results are presented in Table 7. The correlation analysis indicates that there is a meaningful positive correlation between leadership quality practices and performance results in autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu.

TABLE – 7: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP QUALITY PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE RESULTS

	LD	OG	OPR	SRE	SFR	FFR	IER	GSR
LD	1.00							
OG	0.72**	1.00						
OPR	0.61**	0.64**	1.00					
SRE	0.71**	0.79**	0.74*	1.00				
SFR	0.88**	0.78*	0.80**	0.82*	1.00			
FFR	0.79*	0.71**	0.79**	0.75*	0.52**	1.00		
IER	0.75**	0.84**	0.83*	0.86**	0.54**	0.54**	1.00	
GSR	0.73*	0.79*	0.74**	0.72*	0.61**	0.66**	0.52**	1.00

Note: * Significant at five per cent level, ** Significant at one per cent level

Source: Computed Data

Note: LD=Leadership Direction

OG=Organizational Governance

OPR=Organizational Performance Review

SRE=Social Responsibility and Ethics

SFR= Students Focused Results

FFR=Faculty Focused Results

IER=Institutional Effectiveness Results

GSR=Governance and Social Responsibility Results

The results show that leadership direction is positively significantly correlated with students focused results and institutional effectiveness results at one per cent level and it is positively significantly associated with faculty focused results and governance and social responsibility results at five per cent level of significance.

The correlation coefficients indicates that organizational governance is positively significantly associated with faculty focused results and institutional effectiveness results at one per cent level and is positively significantly correlated with student focused results and governance and social responsibility results at five per cent level of significance.

The correlation analysis further shows that organizational performance review is positively significantly correlated with student focused results, faculty focused results and governance and social responsibility results at one per cent level, while it is positively significantly associated with institutional effectiveness at five per cent level of significance.

The results indicate that social responsibility and ethics is positively significantly associated with institutional effectiveness at one per cent level of significance and it is positively significantly correlated with student focused results, faculty focused results and governance and social responsibility at five per cent level of significance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The foregoing analysis shows that the results show that about 70.50 per cent of students are males while the rest of 29.50 per cent of students are females. The results indicate that about 73.50 per cent of students of autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu belong to the age group of 16-17 years followed by 18-19 years (18.50 per cent) and 20-21 years (8.00 per cent). It is clear that about 27.00 per cent of students belong to the Mechanical followed by Electrical and Electronics (23.00 per cent), Electronics and Communication (21.00 per cent), Civil (16.50 per cent) and Computer Science engineering (12.50 per cent).

The student's satisfaction, faculty's satisfaction, service to the students and environment and safety discriminate best among five branches of the students in autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu. Based on the discriminant function, 78.00 per cent of the measures have been correctly classified. The correlation analysis indicates that there is a meaningful positive correlation between leadership quality practices and performance results in autonomous polytechnic colleges in Tamil Nadu.

Leaders in polytechnic colleges often have a space of action where it is possible to influence the inhibiting structures. In polytechnic colleges, which is characterized by internal responsiveness, the leaders are sensitive to the needs of the faculties and students and will change regulation when necessary and possible, in order to support and promote development. This requires measures where leaders develop their habits to listen to experiences made by faculties. This is important for all the efforts made by individual academic faculties to reach their full potential in terms of collaboration and mutual support.

The other side of the coin is that leaders of polytechnic colleges often experience needs for institutional change before individual faculties experience these needs. This phenomenon points towards a need for developed strategies to formulate and implement change top-down. That is, to develop a leadership quality practices suitable to support the engagement shown by individual faculties, which has to be even more promoted and combined with top down initiatives. Only then can the institution get the most out of its support for student learning, performance and personal development. Improving learning and performance outcomes require an approach to leadership development, which focuses on 'instructional leadership'. This means attempting to change the mind set of leaders to regard the processes of teaching and learning as central to their role rather than simply leaving such matters to educators.

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