Higher Education Leadership Training For Academic Administrators At The University Of Port Harcourt Rivers State, Nigeria

Nwafor Alfred Uzoma
Institute Of Education, Faculty Of Education
University Of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
Okoro Chika Ugonma
Institute Of Education, Faculty Of Education
University Of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
Azeke Stephen Ojieriakhi
Institute Of Education, Faculty Of Education
University Of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
Nwosu Silver Chimuanya
Institute Of Education, Faculty Of Education
University Of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

Abstract:
There has been a significant increase in interest in the development of educational leadership in recent years, not least in the school sector. However, little research exists on how leaders in higher education have learnt to lead, particularly those in "middle-leadership" positions such as heads of faculties (Deans) and departments (Heads of Department). A survey research design was used in which data was collected and analysed. The study consists of 74 academics administrators (leaders) this include fourteen (14) Deans of faculties and sixty (60) Heads of Departments in the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Questionnaires were given out between February 2013 and April 2013 to secure academics' perceptions of the development experienced to equip them with the necessary attributes to lead. The findings show that higher education provides leadership training at the University of Port Harcourt. Majority of the respondents agreed that what leaders do is learnt on-the-job, self-taught and acquired through opportunities that working committees present, peer and faculty mentors. Also, on how leadership training at the University of Port Harcourt contribute to the role of the educational leadership. It revealed that most of the participants agreed that leadership training contributes to increasing decision making skills, communication, knowledge on personnel issues, and organizational skills. These findings are in line with Speck (2003), Vaughan (2007) and Jing and Avery (2008) who stated that participants in their studies felt that leadership training provided: more understanding of challenges associated with educational leadership positions, more applicable information to develop skills for leadership positions and increased their knowledge of personnel issues.

1.Introduction

Presently, higher education faces complex visible but uncharted problems which affect the leadership and administration of colleges and universities. Carbone (1981) revealed that higher education has gone through many revolutions since the 1940's. Some of these revolutions include enrollment, international education, adult education, research, student protests, service to society and a revolution of rising expectations on the part of those left behind in the early years.

Cawelti (1982) pointed out that most of these pressing problems are the outgrowth of trends such as declining enrollments of traditional-age students, reduction in federal and state funding, problems with affordability and access to institutions of higher education, information technology, human resources and conflict management, reduced public support, collective bargaining and decentralization of governing boards. This rapid increase in problems has resulted to an increase in the responsibilities of academic administrators (Deans and Heads of Departments) of public institutions of higher education. Nwafor (2012) and Cowetti emphasized that leaders are supposed to lead, provide a sense of direction, motivate others toward attainment of goals, and build consensus among respective constituencies. The academic (leaders) administrators' effectiveness depends largely on how well they gain the co-operation of respective constituencies involved in the development and progress of their institutions, such as legislature, trustees, students, faculties, staff and various community groups.

In addition, for the academic leaders to be effective in meeting increasing changing and demanding responsibilities, ongoing traditional professional development opportunities need to be aligned with contemporary leadership challenges. This will allow academic leaders of colleges and universities to guide their institutions in the midst of ambiguity, continuous change and pressures never before faced by higher education (Astin & Astin,2000a; Avolio, 1997 and Hoff, 1999).

Davis (2003) stated that to be an effective leader, one must have specific knowledge and cultivate essential skills and abilities. McDade (1998) asserted that higher education will continue to face challenging times, and professional development opportunities to develop visionary leaders who turn challenges into opportunities for quality institutional growth is paramount. He further asserted the importance of linking various types of professional activities being offered to the actual tasks and demanding responsibilities of leadership positions.

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact and contributions of professional leadership development on higher education academic leaders. This information is useful in developing leadership training activities which facilitates the transition of leaders entering academic leadership positions and provide information on the type of training which supports the success of both novice and seasoned leaders. Davis (2003) stressed that leaders must be knowledgeable, continue to develop leadership skills, and maintain appropriate attitudes. To achieve this outcome, integrated organizational professional development opportunities can facilitate the knowledge and skills needed to effectively lead institutions of higher education.

Hoppe (2003) stressed that new leaders need continuous trainings, support reassurance, and some one with whom they can discuss their experiences. The exposure to those types of support can expand the vision of academic leaders to move beyond the boundaries and include critical issues currently affecting higher education.

While conferences, institutes and fellowships offer coursework and experience on educational leadership training , other formal or informal methods to gain skills, knowledge, abilities and visibility are available. Internships, mentoring and committee service are opportunities that can occur in the home institution of the potential leader (Amy, 2003; Ard 1994; Bagnato, 2004; Land, 2003; Amed and Yekta 2010; Raines and Alberg, 2003; Speck2003and Voughan,2004; Nwafor, 2012; Duff, 2010 and Long 2011).

One of the most pressing problems confronting tertiary institutions is that of leadership. There have been problems of how to create or install a high quality leadership that can ensure stability, developments, good management, and harmony within the University Ujomu(2001). Taking a look at Nigeria (Middle Hurst 1995) said, university leadership construed either in terms of an individual leader or an organizational function or even as an institutional structure or a model for human action. Lebeau (2000) writing on the Dilemma of Post-Colonial Universities, the problem of leadership was not given the serious theoretical attention it deserved failure of leadership in the Nigerian University is seen in the ethical and technocratic displayed by a crop of university administrators who have emerged on the landscape of university governance since the 1970s. Different types of leader may also be most appropriate at different stages in the development of an organization.

Leadership is not just on essential part of the process of management; it is also an integral part of the social structure and culture of the organization if the manager is to be successful in dealing with people and influencing their behaviour and action. This requires leadership styles, which helps to foster a supportive organizational culture.

Brown (1989) believes that, effective leaderships and workplace organization design and developed programmes must be based on sensitivity to, and understanding of culture, Excellent leaders are not merely aware of their organizations basic assumptions, they also know how to take action to mould and refine them.

In line with this, this study sets out to investigate efficiency and effectiveness in educational administration in higher education in Nigeria in the 21st century.

Two research questions guided this study:
- How does higher education provide for leadership training at the University of Port Harcourt?
- How does leadership training at the University of Port Harcourt contribute to the role of the educational leader?

2.Methodology

A survey research design was used in which data were collected and analyzed in order to compare and infer meaning from them. The population of the study consisted of seventy four (74) academic administrators (leaders) which consist fourteen (14) Deans of Faculties and Sixty (60) Heads of Departments in the University of Port Harcourt.

The instrument used for the study was a well-designed questionnaire, which was divided into two parts (I and II). Part I contains personal and institutional information such as gender, current position, title and number of years in administration.

In part II, an Administrative Leadership Training in Higher Education Questionnaire (ALTHEQ) was adapted from Nevarez and Keyes (2005) and modified to suit the purpose of this study. The ALTHEQ, was designed primarily as a learning aid, consisting of twenty-eight (28) leadership alternatives centered on providing leadership training in higher education and leadership training influencing role as educational leader. The 28-item ALTHEQ was structured on a four-point modified Likert format scale of scoring; Strongly Agree= 4points; Agree=3points; Disagree=2points and Strongly Disagree=1point. The Instrument was validated by experts in the area of measurement and evaluation with a test-retest reliability index of 0.75.

Out of the 74 copies of questionnaire administered by the researchers, 70 were duly completed and returned and were used for data analysis as shown below. Descriptive statistic with mean scores and rank order was used to analyse the research questions.The criterion for (cut off) mean was 2.50 (4+3+2+1/4=10/4).

Thus, any item that is from the cutoff mean and above was regarded as agreed while items below the cutoff mean was regarded as disagreed by the respondents.

3.Results

Research Question 1: How does higher education provide for leadership training at the University of Port Harcourt?

		Deans		Heads of Dept.		Weighed Mean	Decision
		n = 10		n =60		n = 70	
		$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}\,\overline{X}$	
S/NO	Questionnaire items						
1	Traditional education has leadership training integrated within coursework	1.93	0.56	1.84	0.66	1.89	Disagree
2	Opportunities to work in committee prepared me as a leader.	3.07	0.72	3.08	0.74	3.08	Agreed
3	Peer and faculty mentors prepared me as a leader.	2.85	0.76	3.76	1.77	3.66	Agreed
4	Integrate leadership training into formal degree programmes.	3.58	1.48	2.85	0.84	3.74	Agreed
5	Integrate leadership training into the career position accepted	2.93	0.89	2.97	0.75	2.95	Agreed
6	Leadership institutes provide appropriate leadership training.	2.98	0.75	3.10	0.79	3.04	Agreed
7	Your educational institution should provide the opportunity and funding to attend leadership institutes.	2.94	0.68	3.11	0.85	3.03	Agreed
8	It is your responsibility to provide your own opportunities to attend leadership institutes.	2.23	0.73	1.88	0.70	2.06	Disagree
9	Leadership certificate programmes provide appropriate leadership training.	3.11	0.72	2.67	0.98	2.87	Agreed
10	Your educational institution should provide the opportunity and funding to attend leadership certificate programmes.	3.14	0.62	2.82	0.62	2.98	Agreed
11	It is your responsibility to provide your own opportunities to attend leadership certificate programmes	2.20	0.71	2.07	0.75	2.13	Disagree
12	Workshops at academic institutions in which you work provide appropriate leadership training.	2.92	0.76	3.08	1.42	3.00	Agreed
13	Workshops or sessions at national conferences provide appropriate leadership training.	3.96	0.63	2.84	0.76	3.00	Agreed

Table 1: Mean Scores And Standard Deviation Or Respondents On How Higher Education Provide For Leadership Training At The University Of Port Harcourt

TABLE 1 Showed that ten of the thirteen items listed (items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12 and 13) with weighted mean scores of 3.08, 3.66, 3.74, 2.95, 3.04, 3.03, 2.87, 2.98, 3.00 and 3.00 respectively agreed to be related to how higher education provide for leadership training at the University of Port Harcourt. While items 1, 8, and 11 respectively were considered to have disagreed.

Research Question 2: How does leadership training at the University of Port Harcourt contribute to the role of the educational leader?

		Deans		Heads of Dept.		Weighed Mean	Decision
		n = 10		n = 60		n = 70	
		SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	$\overline{X}\,\overline{X}$	
S/No	Questionnaire items						
1	Increased decision making skills.	2.99	0.75	3.09	0.79	3.04	Agreed
2	Increased communication skills	2.94	0.69	3.11	o.85	3.03	Agreed
3	Increased knowledge of personnel issues.	3.80	0.74	3.76	0.76	3.73	Agreed
4	Provided more information on leadership theory.	3.07	0.72	3.08	0.74	3.80	Agreed
5	Provided more applicable information to develop skills set for leadership positions.	3.16	0.63	2.84	0.76	3.00	Agreed
6	Provided more understanding of areas I need to strengthen.	2.20	0.71	2.07	0.75	2.13	Disagreed
7	Increase organizational skills.	2.85	0.76	3.46	0.77	3.16	Agreed
8	Increased collaboration skills.	3.59	1.48	2.85	0.76	3.22	Agreed
9	Increased time management skills.	3.11	0.72	2.64	0.98	2.87	Agreed
10	Increased understanding of the 'big picture' or visionary skills.	2.93	0.89	2.97	0.75	2.95	Agreed
11	Increased my confidence level.	3.14	0.65	2.82	0.78	2.98	Agreed
12	Provided more understanding of the challenges associated with educational leadership positions.	3.80	0.74	3.76	0.76	3.73	Agreed
13	Increased strategic planning skills.	2.85	0.76	2.85	0.76	2.85	Agreed
14	Increased management skills.	3.16	0.63	3.11	0.69	3.14	Agreed
15	Increased budgetary skills/managing financial resources.	1.91	0.56	2.14	0.72	2.03	Disagreed

Table 2: Mean Scores And Standard Deviation Of Respondents On How
Leadership Training At The University Of Port Harcourt Contribute To The Role Of The Educational Leader

TABLE 2 Showed that thirteen of the items listed (items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14) with weighted mean scores of 3.04, 3.03, 3.73, 3.80, 3.00, 3.16, 3.22, 2.87, 2.95, 2.98, 3.73, 3.85, and 3.14 respectively agreed to be related to how leadership training at the University of Port Harcourt contribute to the role of the educational leader (Academic Administrator) while items 6 and 15 are considered negatively (disagreed).

4.Discussion
This study revealed that higher education provide for leadership training at the university of port Harcourt. Table 1 As revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that opportunities to work in committees, peer and faculty mentors, leadership institutes, work-shops, conferences and many more provide appropriate leadership training for the educational leader at the University of Port Harcourt. This findings are supported by Nevarez and Keyes, (2005); Land, (2003) who said that mentorship and partnership

are also important avenues for professional development training. This means that mentoring either formally or informally while in a professional position, can provide benefits to both the mentor and mentee by preparing both for advanced position in their future ambitions.

The findings on how leadership training at the University of Port Harcourt contribute to the role of the educational leader (Table 2) revealed that most participants agreed that leadership training contributes to increasing decision making skills, communication, knowledge on personnel issues, and organizational skills. These findings are equally in line with Speck (2003), Vaughan (2007) and Jing and Avery (2008) who stated that participants in their studies felt that leadership training provided: more understanding of challenges associated with educational leadership positions, more applicable information to develop skills for leadership positions and increased their knowledge of personnel issues.

4.1.Implications For Leadership Training At The University Of Port Harcourt
In a University set-up such as University of Port Harcourt, there is no identifiable centre for leadership training. However, leadership qualities are developed through observation, practice, appointments and services to positions such as Head of

Departments, Deans, Provosts, Directors and above all Vice-Chancellorship. These positions present breeding grounds for leadership qualities. This is because, the challenges and work schedule present situations that train good leaders. Each of the above listed positions last for a minimum of two-years term. This implies that the experience achieved during this period accumulates a lot of training for leaders. However, there are no known training centres or institutes for leadership training where the culture and ethics of leadership is advanced.

Thus leaders trained in the University of Port Harcourt learn by experience on the job and through the educational training acquired over the years.

5.Conclusion
This study has shown that higher education environment provides on-the-job leadership training through appointments into the offices of the Provost, Dean and Head of Department and other unit heads. Also such leadership training at the University of Port Harcourt are limited to a few privileged personnel as only few positions are available and contributes to the role of the academic administrator (educational leader) Consequently, there are no known established leadership training centres or institutes for the entire community system where leaders of tomorrow are trained.

6.Recommendations
The following recommendations should be considered based on the findings and conclusion of this study:
- The Institute (university of port Harcourt) should set up an action plan for higher education leaders (academic administrators) so that consistent efforts are made to undertake leadership training and development.
- The Institute (University of Port Harcourt) should update training programmes to include current issues that higher education (academic) leaders need to address.

7.References
1. Ahmed, Z. A & Yekta, Z.A (2010). Relationship between perceived organizational support, leadership behavior and job satisfaction: An empirical study of Iran. Intangible capital journal, 6(2), 162-184.
2. Amey, M.J. (2003). Research brief: Career paths for community college leaders. American Association of community colleges. Leadership series, 1(2), 1-16.
3. Ard, A.K. (1994). Institute-sponsored internships. New directions for higher Education,
4. New Directions for Higher Education, (87), 11-16.
5. Astin, A.W & Astin, H.S. (Eds.)(2000). Higher education and the need for change. In leadership reconsidered: Engaging Higher Education in social Change (1-7); Battle creek, MI: W.K Kellog foundation. Retrieved April 10, 2013 from http://www.wkkf.org/pubs.CCT/Leadership/pub3368 pdf.
6. Avolio, B.J. (1997). The Great leadership Development system. KLSP Transformational Leadership working papers, Academy of leadership press. Retrieved April 3, 2013 from http://www.academy.umd.edu/publications/klspdocs/bavol-pI.htm.
7. Bagnato, K. (2004). Brave new leadership. Black Issue in Higher Education, 21(14), 28-31.
8. Carbone, R.E (1981). Presidential Passages. Washington DC: American council on Education.
9. Cawelti, G. (1982). Training for Effective school Administration. Educational Leadership, 19, 330-336.
10. Davis, J.R. (2003). Learning to lead: A handbook for postsecondary administrators. Westport, CT: ACE/praeger series on higher education.
11. Duff, S. (2010). Making the case for leadership development. Journal of people Management, 23(1), 41-54.
12. Hoppe, S.L. (2003). Identifying and nurturing potential academic leaders. New directions for Higher Education, 124, 3-12.
13. Jing, F.F. & Avery, G.C. (2008). Missing links in Understanding relationship between leadership and organizational performance. International Business & Economics Research Journal, 7(5), 67-78.
14. Nevarez, c. & Keyes, K.J. (2013). Higher Education Leadership: Learning to lead. European Journal of Management Science and Economics 1(1), 10-21.
15. Land, P.C. (2003). From the other side the academy to academic leadership roles: Crossing the great divide. New Directions for Higher Education, 124, 13-20.

16. Long, C.S. & Thean, L.Y. (2011). Relationship between leadership styles, Job
    Satisfaction and employees Turnover: A Literature review. Research Journal of business management, 5(3), 91-100.
17. McDade, S.A. (1988). Leadership in higher education: Enhancing skills through
    professional programmes. Washington, DC: ERIC clearing House on Higher Education.
18. Nwafor, S.O. (20013). Educational Administration: Concepts and Practice. (2nd edition).
    Port Harcourt: Basjoe Printers.
19. Raines, S.C. & Alberg, M.S. (2003) The role professional development in preparing
    academic leaders. New Directions for Higher Education, 124, 33-39.
20. Speck, B.W. (2003). The role of doctoral programmes in preparing faculty for multiple
    roles in the academy. New Directions for Higher Education. 124, 44-55
21. Vaughan, B.J. (2004). Encouraging educational leadership.
    Medical Education, 34, 199-200.
22. Wooddard, D.B., Love, P. & Komives, S.D. (2000). Leadership. New Directions
    for student services, 91, 81-91.