LEADERSHIP AND EXCELLENCE:
A Tool For Good Governance Of Tertiary Institutions The IPS Experience

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Abstract

Very often, administrators only manage or govern by means of what they perceive as the best administrative procedures and policies without paying regard to the art of leadership. Leadership entails influence persuasion, and direction. It is concerned with the communication of the vision and the development of a culture and set values that lead to what the organization desires for the future. The environment of teaching and learning requires a more complex form of leadership and management because of the presence of diversity of purpose and academic freedom. For effective governance, universities require the use of leadership skills and styles that will enhance the collective role of the university to advance knowledge in all respects.

This paper aims at the sharing of leadership experience gained through a real life situation by a tertiary educational institution that has made a tremendous strides. It discusses the impact of the use of leadership skills in the governance of tertiary educational institutions. The use of appropriate leadership power in an attempt to influence people has also been discussed and the effect on the vision of the organization has been considered. The experience of the Institute of Professional Studies (IPS) confirms that the Rector or Vice-Chancellor is more likely to succeed when he or she shares his vision with others. The case of IPS gives an indication that leaders who combine the middle-of-the-road management style with team management style and behaviour achieve better results.

The article suggests that effective leadership involves the creation of enabling environment, empowerment, collaboration, cordial relationships, and diversity.

Introduction

The effective governance of African universities and other tertiary institutions continue to become an important issue in the light of the increasing demand from the users and beneficiaries of knowledge as well as the growing competition in the provision of knowledge. As numbers of student intake keep rising in the wake of inadequate funding and facilities, the governance of African tertiary institutions becomes more complex and challenging. Universities and other tertiary institutions now need a framework for effective information management in a rational manner with credible needs identification. Structures that will help effective decision making and the implementation of such decisions will have to be put in place while monitoring and reviewing of performance is undertaken continually. There are several challenges stemming from the governance structures through the academic faculties down to the level of the junior members of the institutions. The different perspectives of faculty members and administrators present even a more challenging task that needs to be appropriately addressed by the governors of a typical university.

Corporate Governance is defined as "the system

by which companies are directed and controlled" (Cadbury Report, 1992). It is concerned with the practices and procedures that ensure that an organization is effectively governed so as to achieve its objectives. We agree with Professor Bob Tricker (1984) who is of the view that every organization needs "governing as well as managing". Governance is more than just managing the day-to-day operations of an organization. Gayle and Dennis (2003) indicated that university governance may be seen as a series of concentric circles or a set of overlapping circles. They hinted that an extensive group of stakeholders try to influence the rules and policies of universities in the United States of America. In most African countries however, governments attempt to influence the running of universities because they provide significant amounts of their funding. This has resulted in lack of infrastructure, adequate funding and slow pace of growth. The modern idea of corporate governance requires that universities become responsive to the needs of society and also present value for money. Prestige, effectiveness, and mission diversity are fundamental issues in the governance of universities. According to Brewer, Gates, & Goldman (2002), in the U.S. academic hierarchy, prestige refers to the activities of high-performing institutions that hold top at a diversity positions in that country. Eckel observed Missions Conference in 2007 that because the demonstration of performance is difficult in the academic arena, the characteristics of prestigious institutions in the U.S. become the standard by which others determine their own stance. Institutions in African's higher education have frameworks for authoritative decision making and governance. In resource allocation, a "prestigious and effective institution" has a governance system that ensures that effective distribution is done.

Wren (1995) and Jennings (1960) assert that leadership is a social influence that leaves a mark. According to them leadership involves initiation and guidance that leads to change in character or direction. Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958) define leadership as "A process of interpersonal influence exercised in situation and directed, through the communication process, towards the attainment of a specified goal or goals". Leadership is a process or managerial skill that is applied in having people directed or influenced to work towards the achievement of agreed organizational goals. Good leadership ensures that people work willingly, and in the best way that they can. Good leaders are active and not reactive. They shape ideas instead of responding to them. They make people realize their full capabilities through excellence. "Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. Excellence is not an act but a habit." ... (Aristotle, 384-322 BC).

The success story and the leadership excellence in the IPS case has not been achieved merely because of skills but also by the development of high value relationships based on trust and respect. Sustainable results have been achieved because of core behaviours that helped in transforming a vision into reality (*NMA* 2007). Leadership competencies vision, innovation, inspiration, discipline and strategic management are to be credited. To achieve effectiveness and excellence in the management of tertiary institutions, it is pertinent to have people who are prepared to try something new, while taking the risk to help move an idea forward with deep respect for the budget lines of the institutions.

Leadership Power and Influence
Abraham Zaleznik (1992) says that leadership requires the use of power to influence the thoughts and actions of other people. It is worth mentioning therefore that there are various reasons why some leaders are able to influence their followers effectively while other leaders cannot get their followers to do what they want them to do. This includes reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, expert power, referent power, etc. Some leaders have the capacity to reward those who follow them. The leader's power increases when that leader is considered by subordinates as having control over certain rewards. Some examples of rewards that a leader may possess are praise,

recognition, and attention. These may be part of the leader's personal power. Other rewards that a leader may control are those belonging to the organization. For example a leader may gain his leadership influence because he has control over pay increase and promotion. Coercive power refers to the leader's ability to punish his followers. In some cases coercive power is personal. This is when leaders are considered as lacking recognition, especially during times of criticism of the leader.

Legitimate power refers to the power a leader possesses as a result of occupying a particular position or his role in the organization. In every organization, certain types of requests and directions issued by leaders to subordinates are viewed to be legitimate and valid. Subordinates are obliged to comply with such requests because of the organization. Legitimate power is clearly a faction of the leader's position in the organization and is completely independent of any of the leader's personal characteristics. Expert power refers to power that a leader possesses as a result of his or her knowledge and expertise regarding the tasks to be performed by subordinates. Subordinates are more likely to respond positively to a leader's attempts to influence their behaviour if they view the leader as having information regarding effective task performance that they themselves lack. The possession of expert power by a leader obviously depends upon the personal characteristics of the leader (ie. his or her personal expertise) and it is not determined by the formal position that the leader occupies in the organization. Referent power Is dependent upon the extent to which subordinates identify with, look up to, and wish to emulate the leader. The more that subordinates admire and identify with the leader, the greater the leader's referent power over subordinates. Referent power, like expert power, is totally dependent upon the personal characteristics of the leader and does not depend directly upon the leader's formal organizational position.

The Effects of Leadership Vision
The sharing of power and the exercise of such

power by different groups and people to ensure that corporate objectives are met, are within the province of corporate governance. Through governance, an academic institution ensures that the Academic Boards act in the interests of all Stakeholders including student and staff associations. For efficient and effective governance of African universities, the Vice-Chancellors, Rectors, Principals, and the management teams need not act in their own interests. They must have a vision that can be shared by all for the achievement of the goals of the universities. Peter Drucker (1992) said: "The best way to predict the future is to create it."

In the case of IPS, the leadership created what never was and made a difference by leading the management team into what IPS is today. It developed the vision and spent considerable time reinforcing the shared vision. It maintained the needed stamina in order to see the vision through. The leadership remained visionary and motivated the workforce through sound new reward systems and staff development programs. It breathed life into the Institute through the introduction of new programs, especially fee-paying courses that eventually improved the financial base of the Institute. The leadership, as part of its vision led the Institute in establishing structures and procedures that were not part of the traditional operating structures of the Institute. The Institute developed a vision that depicted an ambitious and desirable future for the Institute. The Institute now has the basis for building on in order to become a prestigious professional institution.

Leadership Traits, Behaviour and Change
Leadership is one of the most studied aspects of management. A tremendous variety of research, terms, and values underlie leadership definitions, theories and findings. There are three widely accepted historical models, namely trait, behavioral, and contingency theories.

The trait theory describes effective leaders in a systematic fashion focused on distinctive

internal qualities or characteristics of an individual, (i.e. height, weight, appearance, energy etc.). Early researchers initially measured various traits of individuals and then typically had the individual work in leaderless groups. The idea was to see whether certain traits would predict the individuals who would emerge that is, be identified by members of the group as leaders. Research however revealed that there is a weak relationship between personal traits and leader success (G A Yukl,1981). The leadership success at IPS is therefore not totally being attributed to the traits of only the Chief Executive Officer. Although there are a number of myths and realities in dealing with change, the new leadership of IPS believed that it was the right time for the change when it took office.

From the year 2001 to the present time, the Institute of Professional Studies (IPS) has been

The Leadership Grid Figure

SOURCE: The Leadership Grid (figure, Paternalism figure and Opportunism figure from Leadership Dilemmo—Grid Solutions by Robert R. Blake and Anne Adams McCanse (formerly the Managerial Grid by Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton). Houston, Gulf Publishing Company (Grid figure: p. 29, Paternalism figure: p. 33, Opportunism figure: p. 31). Copyright 1991 by Scientific Methods, Inc. Reproduced by permission of the owners.

undergoing dramatic changes which require that people are managed through the change. The philosophy of acknowledging people and

rewarding efforts is now the norm. This has contributed to the success of the Institute. The leadership took steps and unfreezed the status quo, moved to the desired state and are now operating by the new conditions with flexibility (Kurt Lewin, 1935). All workers and external stakeholders are actively involved in the process. They were given time to adjust while constant communication was undertaken. The culture of IPS was renewed and grounded on innovative approaches that created better performance, better leadership, and effective management.

The behavioural approach of leadership focuses on what the leader actually does when dealing with subordinates. The theories consider the behavioural aspects of the leader and suggest how effective a leader may be. Some behavioural issues worth considering in the governance of tertiary institutions are first, consideration and initiation structure; second is concern for people and concern for production, and the third is bosscentered and subordinate-centered.

Hemphil and Coons (1957) identified two categories of leadership behaviour thus: Consideration and Initiation Structure. Consideration refers to the extent to which a leader is considerate and concerned about the quality of his or her relationship with subordinates. This involves friendliness, consultation with subordinates, open communication with subordinates, supportiveness, and representation of subordinate interests. Initiation structure refers to the extent to which the leader is task oriented and concerned with utilizing resources and personnel effectively in order to accomplish group goals. A leader with this type of behaviour does the planning, co-ordination, problem solving and criticizes poor work by subordinates. The issue of concern for production, and concern for people, is also very crucial for leadership excellence in the governance of tertiary institutions. Given below is the grid that explains the concern of the leader.
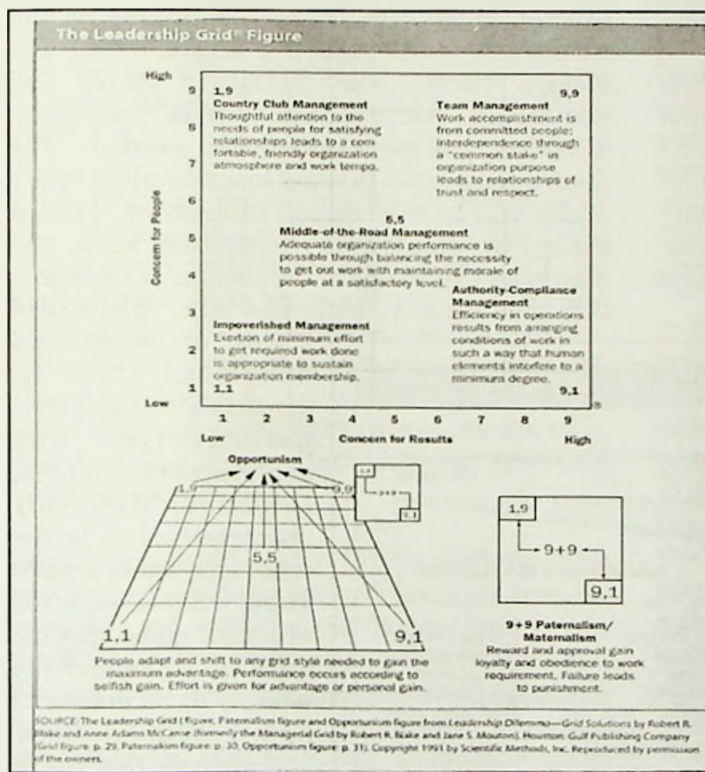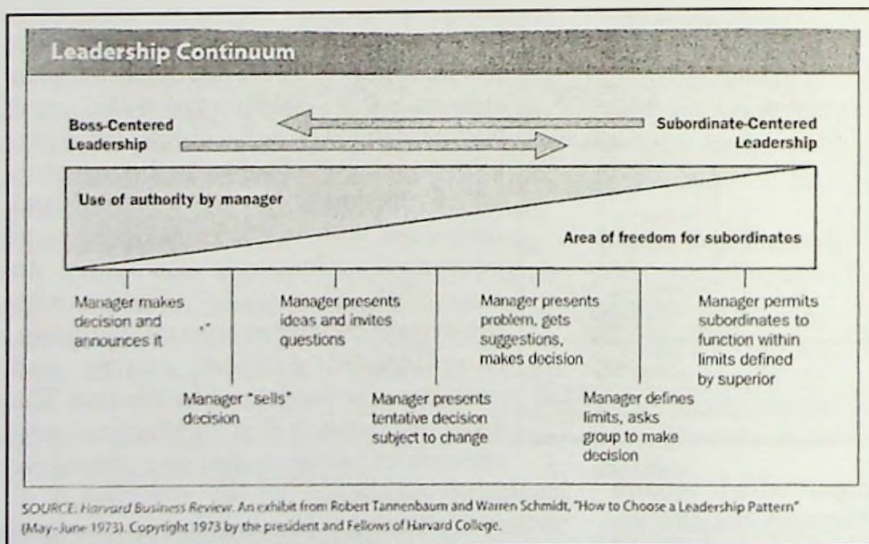
The "Impoverished Manager" (1.1) is lazy, shows little effort or concern for staff or work targets while the "Country Club Manager" (1.9) is attentive to staff needs and develops satisfying relationships. He however, pays little attention to the achievement of results. The "Authority-Compliance Manager" (9.1) concentrates more on the achievements of results. The needs of people are virtually ignored and conditions of work are so arranged that people cannot interfere to any significant extent. The Middle of the road manager (5.5) or the dampened pendulums is the guy who keeps the balance. He gets people to work while maintaining their moral at a satisfactory level. It is interesting to have a team management manager (9.9) because is a high performance manager who achieves high results through "leading" committed people who strongly identify themselves with the organizational aims.

It is proven from the IPS case that the "Middle of the Road Management" combined with Team management styles and behaviour help to achieve results. Team-work at IPS was built over the years through committees while the chief executive kept the balance and ensured that activities were on course. The Rector as the Leader exercised minimum level of authority and allowed subordinates to function within limits as shown in the Leadership Continuum given below:

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Situation Vs Influence and Satisfaction

Evans and House (1971) postulates that a leader can influence the satisfaction, motivation, and performance of subordinates primarily by providing them with rewards, making the attainment of those rewards contingent upon the accomplishment of performance goals, and helping subordinates to obtain rewards by clarifying the path to the goals. It requires that the leaders help subordinates to understand exactly what they must do to obtain the relevant rewards (Robert J House, 1971) and making these paths easier to travel (i.e. providing subordinates with coaching, direction, and assistance when needed). The theory argues that in order to accomplish this, a leader will have to engage in different types of leadership behaviour, depending upon the nature and demands of the particular situation. Path-goal theory identifies four distinctive styles of leadership behaviour, that is, directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. Directive leadership characterizes a leader who lets subordinates know what is expected of them, gives specific guidance regarding what is to be done and how it should be done, and ensures that his or her role as leader of the group is clearly understood. Such a

Leadership Continuum

Boss-Centered Leadership ← → Subordinate-Centered Leadership

Use of authority by manager

Area of freedom for subordinates

| Manager makes decision and announces it | Manager presents ideas and invites questions | Manager presents problem, gets suggestions, makes decision | Manager permits subordinates to function within limits defined by superior |

Manager "sells" decision | Manager presents tentative decision subject to change | Manager defines limits, asks group to make decision

SOURCE: *Harvard Business Review*. An exhibit from Robert Tannenbaum and Warren Schmidt, "How to Choose a Leadership Pattern" (May-June 1973). Copyright 1973 by the president and Fellows of Harvard College.

leader also schedules work to be done. In the IPS case, the leadership maintained definite standards of performance, and encouraged group members to follow standard rules and regulations. Administrative manuals that guided performance by staff were introduced accordingly.

Supportive Leadership is produced by a friendly and approachable leader who shows concern for the needs and wellbeing of subordinates. A supportive leader treats subordinates as equals and frequently. He does little things to make the work more pleasant and enjoyable. In participative leadership the leader, when faced with decision, consults with subordinates, solicits their suggestions and takes ideas seriously in arriving at a decision. The achievementoriented leader constantly emphasizes excellence in performance and simultaneously displays confidence that subordinates can and will achieve the high standards that are set. Such a leadership style sets challenging performance goals and encourages subordinates to take personal responsibility for the accomplishment of those goals.

In the IPS case, the leadership team displayed confidence in the subordinate staff that they would perform well to achieve the new set goals. For example, some secretarial staff were given higher responsibilities (tasks that are normally performed by staff of higher caliber). This was because in April 2001 when the new leadership took office the Institute did not have Assistant Registrars although these positions had been established.

Ram Charan and Geoffrey Colvin (1999) say the best leaders are those who are deeply interested in others and can bring out the best in them. In the IPS case, the leadership put people first and created an enabling environment through empowerment, collaboration, cordial relationships, and diversity. In modern times the leadership has to share power rather than hoard it. The "we" and "us" mentality was developed.

The pathgoal theory of leadership argues that no single style of leader behaviour will universally result in high levels of subordinate motivation and satisfaction. Instead, the theory suggests that different types of situations require different styles of leader behaviour. The theory suggests that the personal characteristics of subordinates and the characteristics of the work environment should be considered. A number of personal characteristics of subordinates are thought to influence the extent to which subordinates will experience a leader's behaviour as acceptable and satisfying. When subordinates perceive their ability to be low, they are likely to find directive leadership acceptable and to see it as helping them to perform more effectively in the future. However, when subordinates perceive their ability to be high, directive leadership is likely to be perceived as unacceptable and is unlikely to have any positive effects upon subordinate satisfaction or motivation.

Most staff members of IPS viewed what happened to them as determined by circumstances and events outside themselves and beyond their own control that is, they are people with external locus of control. Where necessary, the leadership adopted the directive style of leadership because subordinates responded positively to this.

It is interesting to note that the particular needs, motives, and personality characteristics of subordinates influence their acceptance of different leadership styles and satisfaction. Subordinates who have a strong need for achievement react positively to the achievement oriented leadership style. Those with a strong need for affiliation responded more positively to the supportive or participative leadership style. In line with the path-goal theory, the leadership adopted different styles at different times and on different occasions. Certain characteristics of the work environment influence the extent to which the various leadership styles will have a positive impact upon subordinate motivation and performance. Three important

contingency factors that operate in the work environment have to be constantly considered. These are Subordinates' tasks, the formal authority system of the organization, and the primary work group.

An effective leadership style (in terms of motivating subordinates) is one that complements the subordinates' environment by providing direction, assistance, and support that would otherwise be missing. Thus, if subordinates are working on a highly ambiguous task in an organization with few set policies and procedures, the theory predicts that a directive leadership style will increase motivation and performance by helping subordinates understand what they need to do in order to perform effectively. On the other hand, the theory predicts that if subordinates are working on a high routine and structured task in an organization with elaborate rules and regulations, directive leadership will not facilitate performance but will simply create frustration and resentment among subordinates.

Route-Mapping for Success

In the IPS case, strategic planning was used as a leadership tool to create an enabling environment and provide the route-map needed for success. The first ever strategic plan was prepared by a strategic planning committee chaired by the Rector of the Institute. The Governing Council of the Institute approved of the plan that served as the game plan for the period 2001 to 2004. Tactical plans were also prepared for purposes of achieving the overall goals at unit levels. Through an environmental scanning exercise, the strategic planning process helped to shape the future of the Institute.

The exercise revealed the effect of environmental factors (such as the economy, government policy, technology, and social issues) on the operations of the Institute. This guided the management philosophy and contributed immensely to the success story of IPS. The Institute remained pro-active in its approach in order to ensure effective planning.

Heads of Directorates and Academic Staff Associations were involved in the planning process. The plan therefore gained acceptance and the staff got committed in its implementation. Michael Porter (1987) in his paper on Corporate Strategy: The State of Strategic Thinking said whatever techniques are used a good plan should contain the following elements:
• An analysis of the industry
• Sources of competitive advantage
• An analysis of existing and potential competitors
• An assessment of the company's competitive position
• Selection or ratification of strategy
• Actions

The analysis of the management of education industry in Ghana revealed that the Institute had goodwill with increasing number of student applications. The Institute therefore took advantage of the market opportunity available and introduced fee-paying programs. In all these, the leadership played a very significant role by always leading that is, designing and/or prompting what needs to be done. Even though the Institute had that game plan, people sometimes argued and challenged certain actions that were meant for the achievement of the planned targets.

One lesson therefore learnt is that people can have a change of mind irrespective of whether they were part of the planning process or not and that when this occurs leaders should continue to persuade and stick to the Agenda that has been shared and accepted by many. Another lesson learnt is that as the Institute pursued its intended strategies other valuable strategies emerged. The workings of both intended and emergent strategies therefore have to be ensured for good governance. The Institute continually monitored the working of the strategic plan and where reviews were needed these were carried out by way of additional directives and information. On several occasions people have to be reminded that a particular line of action was necessary for the achievement of targets and the overall goals of the game plan.

The IPS experience confirms that the vision owner will always have to be on his guard to keep others on track, especially when the organization is undergoing a major change. The route-map needs to be revisited regularly to ensure that major deviations do not occur.

The Role of Personality in Understanding Others

Personality plays a vital role in an organization because one has to deal with other people all the time. Individuals view things differently and as such create personality difference. Such difference then serves as a barrier to performance and opportunities. In an academic institution, there is diversity to the extent that differences occur most of the time. It is expected that qualities such as basic honesty, concern for others and open-mindedness will belong potentially to all people (B Schwartz, 1990). As an institution experience greater diversity, this will not always be the case and therefore the need for greater tolerance. When people especially members of the top management, exercise sufficient tolerance, the different positive qualities of most people can be exploited to help the organization achieve its full potential.

The leader's challenge in dealing with different people is to be wise, caring, and flexible in meeting the needs of the people. Interpersonal relationship is influenced by the person's culture, how that individual has been raised and his or her own personality that is, whether a traditional, participative or individualistic (Kagitcibasi and Berry).

The effective leader in a tertiary institution should be aware that some members of faculty and the administration are traditionalists who believe that there is time and place for everything as is taught by scripture in Ecclesiastes 3:1-2. Such people have the notion that the best way to grow is to follow an established order. They believe in hierarchy and are comfortable with structural and organizational clarity. The IPS experience indicates that some top ranking officers as well as middle-management level staff are traditionalists.

As the Institute traveled through its reforms, people welcomed the introduction of order by means of organization charts, policies, statutes and the like. As staff meetings and team-work was introduced, the participaticipants also displayed their love for human interaction and shared the basic values that were introduced. The participants enjoyed working with and through others. They assisted very much in meeting both work and social needs within IPS. There were some few members of the Institute that displayed individualistic personalities. While some groups of people aimed at particular targets and organizational goals those with individualistic personalities favoured different directions and goals. This resulted in minor conflicts which were either dealt with or ignored.

In all these the leadership team maintained balance in meeting different needs. Organisational values sometimes affect a leader's effectiveness and the leadership process as a whole (England and Lee, 1974). The personal value of a leader very often affects the perception of the leader. The leader who values career success is likely to see mistakes by subordinates as impediments to growth whereas the leader who has a great value for supportiveness will see mistakes of subordinates as a chance to play a role by offering assistance. The latter then identifies that there is the need to help the subordinate to improve or grow. The relationship of the leader with others is also affected by the values of the leader. Some leaders have great value for obedience, conformity and politeness and therefore will have difficulty in understanding followers who are self-reliant, independent, creative and rebellious. Values influence the way leaders acquire and use power as well as the way they deal with conflict.

The experience of the leadership of IPS indicates that values play an important role in the leadership. The pastoral role of the Rector, who happens to be a Minister of Religion, contributed in his understanding of people with different and varied attitudes, values, and perceptions.

Conclusion

The role of a leader is to mobilize and energise the group. The leader serves as the ambassador of the group and a model as well. A leader gives sense of direction in times of change. Effective leadership involves the creation of a compelling vision and development of strategies that will work towards the achievement of that vision. He or she sets examples and produces own output.

The concept of a manager differs in the sense that the manager just keeps the organization running. He controls under the belief that systems and processes will work. The manager's role is administrative. The leader's role as is to influence people and have them perform willingly. The lessons given have revealed that leadership power is effective when there is a clear vision that points into a future of success. The IPS experience explains that power lies in the strength of the quality of relationships rather than titles and policies. It is also clear that leadership influence and follower satisfaction have links to success in an organization. It is also confirmed that people are now looking for empowerment rather than controls, therefore strict rules and top-down control will not yield good results in terms of performance by subordinates. The case supports the idea that the world is moving towards diversity and universities need to respond accordingly.

No leader can exist in isolation. It is only by providing his worth through the achievement of goals that a leader, despite his structural authority, will be regarded by subordinates as being valuable or even be accepted as an integral member of the group. This implies that the governors of universities can only succeed if they combine the "manager concept" with the "leader concept". It is not enough to just manage a university.

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