Middle Level Managers' Quality of Leadership and Good Governance, and Organizational Performance of Wolaita Sodo University

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between middle level managers' quality of leadership and good governance, and organization performance of Wolaita Sodo University. The study employed descriptive survey method and used quantitative approach. College/school Deans, Department heads and Coordinators were source of data. Using availability sampling technique, 61 middle level managers in the university were included in the study. Accordingly, IQAP-Self instrument and demographic variables survey questionnaires were employed to collect data. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The result of this study showed that all subscales of a goal statement that identifies a desired organization performance have significant correlation with one another. Finally, the researchers recommended that the university officials should identify whether there are skilled purchasing specialists, system exists to collect feedback from all stakeholders, establishes a reporting and evaluation system to check the effectiveness and efficiency of purchasing activities, takes immediate measures when inconsistencies happen in purchasing of materials, avails sufficient properties in safety stocks to run activities without problems and system exists to check whether or not properties are registered, placed and distributed in a proper and safe manner in order to ensure efficient purchasing and implements systematic procedures to ensure efficient property management and accountability.
Keywords: Good governance. Quality leadership, Organization performance

1. Introduction

Educational leadership and governance in the same area has a critical role in the transformation of society in general and for the entire institution in particular. For change to happen specifically for quality education, effective leaders as well as managers play a key role. In many parts of the world, it is believed that schools require quality leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their students and learners (Tony Bush, 2008).

Good governance now a days become a central part of the international development agenda. Beyond education, it is seen as a condition for increased economic growth, accelerated poverty reduction and improved service provision. Education governance is not simply the system of administration and management of education in a country. In its broadest sense, it is concerned with the formal and informal processes by which policies are formulated, priorities identified, resources allocated, and reforms implemented and monitored.

The rapid changes in the higher education context driven by political, economic and socio cultural forces in the latter part of the 20th century have generated concern for quality and created challenges to the implicit and self evident traditional views about assuring quality in universities (Massy, 2003; Amaral, 2007; Martin and Stella, 2007; Brookes and Becket, 2008).

Governance is an issue not only for central government but also for every level of the system, from the education ministry down to the classroom and community. It is ultimately concerned with the distribution of power in decision-making at all levels (GMR, 2009).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between middle level managers' quality of leadership and good governance, and organization performance of Wolaita Sodo University., Ethiopia. The contention that quality education could usher in good governance needs be seriously looked into because a knowledgeable, skilled, well-articulated man, has more to offer to the nation than half baked individuals who do not have much to offer to the nation other than to satisfy their selfish interests.

2. Literature

2.1. The Leadership Context in Higher Education

Leadership roles in academic institutions have a number of anomalies; whilst traditional senior executive roles (e.g., President, Vice-President, Chief Executive) resonate with executive roles encountered in other sectors, academic leadership roles (such as Deans or Heads of School) are unusual and commonly have complications such as transitory nature of role -holders. Moreover, traditionally in some situations, academic roles can be given on an almost honorary basis as "first among equals" to a senior or established professor (Davies, Hides, & Casey, 2001). Faculty positions usually combine the role of teacher, scholar, researcher and institutional citizen (Astin & Astin, 2000) all of which have leadership responsibility in some form or other, either explicitly or implicitly specified within the role.

There has been a growing concern in the role of leaders within Higher Education (HE) institutions in recent years, driven both by the influence of HE institutions in developing learners who later develop as leaders in wider society, and by the changing shape of HE leadership itself in the face of global challenges in the sector. The reason why growing appreciation in educational leadership in the early part of the 21st century is because of the widespread belief that the quality of leadership and management makes a significant difference to college or department in general, student outcomes in specific and in overall organizational performance.

The leadership in the organization is to meet the three challenges. The first challenge is to provide a shared vision of where the organization is heading and what its purpose is (the mission). The second challenge is to set objectives, that is, to convert the strategic vision and directional course into specific performance outcomes for each key area which leaders deem important for success. The third challenge in providing strategic direction is to generate and develop a strategy that will determine how to achieve the objectives. Bolden (2008) argues that there is little insight into how leadership is actually demonstrated in higher education. Although related studies identified leadership as a concrete and observable phenomenon, no consensus has yet been reached on the exact characteristics of a successful leader in higher education (Buller, 2006).

In many parts of the world, including South Africa, there is recognition that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their learners (Tony Bush, 2008). The elusiveness of the leadership notion has enticed researchers to interpret, capture and analyze the essence of leadership in higher education from different perspectives. However, leaders in HE institutions have to examine how to better lead their organizations, and must also find approaches which fit best in the HE context; i.e. the most effective leadership approach. However, this is not straightforward since there is no clear consensus on the definition of leadership (Kennedy, 1994) and the parallel and sometimes interweaving evolution of leadership ideologies complicate the picture.

2.2. Deans and Heads as Quality Leaders

The importance of quality leadership and management for the successful operation of schools and colleges is broadly acknowledged in the twenty-first century. There is great attention in that the quality of leaders, and leadership, is critical if colleges or departments are to produce the best possible outcomes for their learners, and their stakeholders. As several studies shows deans and department heads improve school morale through honest communication, and particularly by involving faculty in meaningful decisions that affect them. Deans and heads are also responsible for ensuring opportunities for faculty input and supporting faculty in adapting to any changes to mission and institutional priorities (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education, 2014). While the educational policies and procedures play a significant role in the mission accomplishment of higher institution, Deans are ultimately responsible for implementation of such policies and procedures (Elham Shahmandi *et al.*, 2011).

Research on deans and their leadership effectiveness is sparse. Effective leaders are required to use problem-solving processes, maintain group effectiveness and develop group identification. They should also be dynamic, passionate, have a motivational influence on other people, be solution-focused and seek to inspire others. The most significant function of an institution of higher learning (IHL) relies on its leadership effectiveness in creating a pleasant teaching environment for faculty and in providing students with quality of education they deserve (Afnan Al-Shuaiby, 2009). Academic leaders—especially the dean, and department heads—play critical roles in shaping the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of faculty members. Leaders with a realistic and well-communicated vision, good problem-solving skills, and people skills should also have a good personal skill, be resilient and learn how to navigate the situation well enough to achieve desired goals. The study recommends the appointment of deans through standard recruitment practices, rather than election or selection. It also recommends leadership assessment and training for leadership competences before a dean takes office.

2.3. Leadership Matters

Leadership effects are usually largest where and when they are needed most. While the evidence shows small but

significant effects of leadership actions on student learning across the spectrum of schools, existing research also shows that demonstrated effects of successful leadership are considerably greater in schools that are in more difficult circumstances. Indeed, there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader. Many other factors may contribute to such turnarounds, but leadership is the catalyst. (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Louis et al. (2010) offered a definition of "leadership" that is distilled from the essence of their findings: "Leadership is all about organizational improvement; more specifically, it is about establishing agreed-upon and worthwhile directions for the organization in question, and doing whatever it takes to prod and support people to move in those directions". In the executive summary of that report, the researchers said that "leadership effects on student learning occur largely because leadership strengthens professional community; teachers' engagement in professional community, in turn, fosters the use of instructional practices that are associated with student achievement" (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010).

Other researchers conducted a meta-analysis that focused on the relationship between school leadership and student achievement. They also found that principal leadership is correlated with student achievement and that there were especially strong links between specific principal behaviors and student learning. One such behavior was the extent to which the principal "is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems" (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). In the view of those researchers, "effective leadership means more than knowing what to do—it's knowing *when, how, and why to do it*" (Waters et al., 2003, emphasis added). In a recent report, the Wallace Foundation (2011) identified five key functions of principal leadership:

- Shaping a vision of academic success for all students, one based on high standards.
- Creating a climate hospitable to education in order that safety, a cooperative spirit and other foundations of fruitful interaction prevail.
- Cultivating leadership in others so that teachers and other adults assume their part in realizing the school vision.
- Improving instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn at their utmost.
- Managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement.

The report identified an important qualification about those key leader functions: Each of these five tasks needs to interact with the other four for any part to succeed. It's hard to carry out a vision of student success, for example, if the school climate is characterized by student disengagement, or teachers don't know what instructional methods work best for their students, or test data are clumsily analyzed. When all five tasks are well carried out, however, leadership is at work. (Wallace Foundation, 2011).

2.4. Organizational Performance
According to Chen, et al. (2006), organizational performance means the "transformation of inputs into outputs for achieving certain outcomes. With regard to its content, performance informs about the relation between minimal and effective cost (economy), between effective cost and realized output (efficiency) and between output and achieved the outcome (effectiveness)".

According to Bolman & Deal (2003), DeClerk (2008) and Scott & Davis (2015), there is no general agreement in the literature on the standards to be used in measuring the organizational performance. However, there are four main dominant approaches: Goal Approach. People create organizations for a specific purpose which is determined by the stakeholders. The organizational performance is the ability of the organization to achieve its goals.

The System Resource Approach. This approach discovers the relation between the organization and the environment. As said by Cutler et al. (2003) an organization is effective when it takes advantage of its environment in the attainment of high value and rare resources to approve its operations.

Constituency Approach. According to Agle, et al. (2006), an organization is effective when multiple stakeholders perceive the organization as effective. The organizations with more control over resources are likely to have the most influence on the performance (Scott, Davis, 2007).

Competing Values Approach. It was developed by Cameron and Quinn (2006) and it states that organizational goals are created in different ways by the various expectations of multiple districts. Therefore, organizations may have different criteria to measure performance. According to Cameron, et al. (2014), stakeholders support the adaptability of their organizations, they want them to be flexible, stable and effective. According to Cohen & Bradford (2005), a performance and effective organization has a high degree of collaboration and commitment among stakeholders through work groups and management.

3. Research Methodology
3.1. Research Design
This study was quantitative research and aimed at assessing the relationship between middle level managers'

quality of leadership and good governance, and organization performance of Wolaita Sodo University based on their own perception. In addition, the study aimed at describing the leadership and governance of the middle level managers in relation to demographic variables (leadership experience, academic rank and college/school). In order to reduce the raw data obtained to a more meaningful form and identify the quality of leadership and good governance of middle level managers, a descriptive survey method was employed.

3.2. Data Sources

Sources of data for this study were college/school deans, department heads and coordinators in the university under consideration. Accordingly, all college/school deans, department heads and coordinators in the eight colleges/schools participated in this study.

3.3. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The university has eight colleges/schools, namely college of engineering, natural and computational science, business and economics, social science and humanity, and agriculture, and from school of education and behavioral science, veterinary medicine and law in the main campus. Accordingly, except the School of Public Health, all department heads in the rest of eight colleges/schools and coordinators were included in the study. The School of Public Health was excluded because it was used for pilot testing of the instrument. There are 36 Departments in the 8 colleges and 24 coordinators in the entire school/collage of main campus. Accordingly, among 36 Departments in the 8 colleges and 24 coordinators in the entire school/collage of main campus, 33 department, 7 college and 21 coordinators, who are volunteer for the study were included.

3.4. Data Collection Tools and Procedures

Data was collected using the Institutional Quality Assurance Policy (IQAP)-Self-instrument which was developed by Wolaita Sodo University to assess the relationship between middle level managers' quality of leadership and good governance, and organization performance of Wolaita Sodo University, which has been developed by consulting various experiences of higher education institutions at national level. In addition to the IQAP - Self-instrument, a Demographic Survey Instrument called the Personal Information Data Sheet was also included in the survey packet to collect information relating to the subject's years of service, leadership experience, their current position, academic rank, training access related with leadership, and name of the college/school. The IQAP - Instruments consists of 11 focus areas those are thematic representations of related activities and more standards that means a goal statement that identifies a desired performance. The respondents were expected to select the answer that most closely matches how they think they would typically respond in a given situation. The focus area selected for this study were further described including expected standards and detailed performance indicators. Thus, it was collected from the respondents through closed-ended structured questionnaire using a five level rating scales of performance indicator. The Rating Scales for all Indicators are Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, Good, Very Good and Excellent (where 1= unsatisfactory and 5= Excellent). The reliability of the instrument was maintained in such a way that it was pilot tested on School of Public Health before it was employed for the actual data collection purpose. Accordingly, the coefficients of reliability of items measuring all variables are found to be Cronbach's alpha, $\alpha= 0.80$. According to Gay (1980), if reliability coefficient, greater than 0.50, then, it can be accepted as reliable instrument. The items were, therefore, found to have good ground to be used in gathering the relevant data for the study. To maintain the validity, a comment of the school at which the pilot study was carried out (expert review) was incorporated during modification of the instrument.

3.5. Data Analysis

The quantitative data obtained through IQAP-questionnaire and a Demographic Survey Instrument was analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 20.0. The data were analyzed by calculating the frequency, percentage and Pearson r correlation. Furthermore, before starting the analysis, the researchers codified the quantitative data obtained to facilitate its organization, retrieval and interpretation.

4.   Result and Discussions

Data solicited from the respondents through questionnaire are themed and analyzed along the research questions and interpreted as follows;

Table 1. Distribution of Middle Level Managers by Current Position

Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Department Head	28	45.9
Coordinator	27	44.3
Dean	6	9.8
Total	**61**	**100**

As previously explained in the Table 1, among 66 expected respondent which are currently active in the entire position in the university as Dean, Coordinator and Head for departments, a total of 61 volunteer respondents were participated in our studies. Among them, around 90% of respondents were heads and coordinators and the rest 9.8 percent of respondents were dean.

Table 2. Distribution of Middle Level Managers by College/School

Colleges/Schools	Frequency	Percentage
School of Low	4	6.6
School of Veterinary Medicine	3	4.9
School of Education and Behavioral Science	6	9.8
College of Business and Economics	7	11.5
College of natural and Computational Science	9	14.8
College of Agriculture	11	18.0
College of Social Science & Humanity	12	19.7
College of Engineering	9	14.8
Total	**61**	**100**

Result from the above table (Table 2) revealed that most of the respondents were from college of social science and humanity, and agriculture. Whereas, the rest 9, 9, 7, 6, 4, and 3 percent of the respondents were from college of engineering, natural and computational science, business and economics, and from school of education and behavioral science, veterinary medicine and low respectively.

Table 3. Distribution of Middle Level Managers by Work Experience

Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage
0 – 5	29	47.5
6 – 10	27	44.3
>11	5	8.2
Total	**61**	**100**

Table 3 indicates the work experience of middle level managers within and outside the university in general. The number of respondents having 0-5 years of work experience was 29, respondents of 6-10 years experience were 27 and the number of respondent having 11 and more years of experience was 5. This shows the majority of the respondent that means 85.2 percent were having less than and equals to 5 years of leadership experience.

Table 4. Distribution of Middle Level Managers by Leadership Experience

Leadership Experience	Frequency	Percentage
0 – 5	52	85.2
6 – 10	6	9.9
>11	3	4.9
Total	**61**	**100**

Table 4 indicates that the leadership experience of middle level managers within and outside the university in general. The number of respondents having 0-5 years of leadership experience was 52, respondents of 6-10 years leadership experience were 6 and the number of respondent having 11 and more years of leadership experience was 3. This shows the majority of the respondent (85.2%) were having less than and equals to 5 years of leadership experience.

Table 5. Distribution of Middle Level Managers by Training Access

Leadership Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	23	37.7
No	38	62.3
Total	**61**	**100**

Respondents were asked that whether they have got training access on leadership or not previously. However, the majority of the respondents were does not engaged on leadership training priory. Whereas the rest 37.7 percent of the respondents have got training related with leadership ahead.

Table 6. Distribution of Middle Level Managers by Academic Rank

Leadership Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Associate professor	1	1.6
Assistant Professor	16	26.7
Lecture	41	67.2
Assistant lecture	3	4.9
Total	**61**	**100**

The analytical result in Table 6 revealed that the majority of the respondents were ranked as lecture. On the other hand 26.7, 4.9 and 1.6 percent of the respondent were ranked as assistant professor, assistant lecture and associate professor, respectively.

Table 7. Correlation between Organization Performance and a goal statement that identifies a desired performance

Variable	N	Pearson 'r'	Sig(2-tailed)
Shared vision and values that are consistent with system vision and priorities	61	0.464***	0.000
Effective institutional policies and procedures are in place	61	0.624***	0.000
Future trends and directions are identified for sustainable institutional improvement	61	0.526***	0.000
The university made to be a professional learning community	61	0.587***	0.000
The University ensures efficient financial resource management and accountability	61	0.523***	0.000
The University has systematic procedures to ensure efficient purchasing	61	0.319**	0.012
University establishes and implements systematic procedures to ensure efficient property management and accountability	61	0.317**	0.013
Effective communication channels with all stakeholders are ensured and, where appropriate, enhanced by technology	61	0.417***	0.001
Organization Performance	61		

Correlation is significant at the 0.01* and 0.05** level (2-tailed)**

As shown in Table 7 the magnitude of correlation coefficient (Pearson 'r') between organization performance and a goal statement that identifies a desired organization performance of the University. As the above result shows, the mean score was significant at 0.01 level for six variables or a goal statements mentioned above and at 0.05 level the rest two goal statements. It means that there is significant and positive correlation between goal statement that identifies a desired performance and organization performance the University. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between a goal statement and organization performance of the university is rejected.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of the study reveal that all subscales of a goal statement that identifies a desired organization performance have significant correlation with one another. It is concluded that the subscales of a goal statement that identifies a desired organization performance have significant correlation with the subscales of organization performance. Among a goal statement that identifies a desired organization performance; the subscale of effective institutional policies and procedures are in place, the university made to be a professional learning community, future trends and directions are identified for sustainable institutional improvement, shared vision and values that are consistent with system vision and priorities, and the University ensures efficient financial resource management and accountability are significantly correlated with subscale of organization performance than the subscale of the University has systematic procedures to ensure efficient purchasing and University establishes and implements systematic procedures to ensure efficient property management and accountability with the subscale of organization performance. The university middle level managers and too higher-level managers should give high enfaces on a goal statement that identifies a desired organization performance to support the University's efforts to achieve its vision and mission through the development and implementation of academic programs that meet national and international standards. Therefore, it is recommended that the university officials should identify whether there are skilled purchasing specialists,

system exists to collect feedback from all stakeholders, establishes a reporting and evaluation system to check the effectiveness and efficiency of purchasing activities, takes immediate measures when inconsistencies happen in purchasing of materials, avails sufficient properties in safety stocks to run activities without problems and system exists to check whether or not properties are registered, placed and distributed in a proper and safe manner in order to ensure efficient purchasing and implements systematic procedures to ensure efficient property management and accountability.

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