

Roles of female leaders of education in Vietnam National University

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Abstract: In order to understanding the increasing number of women as leaders in Vietnamese higher education. The research was a qualitative study using a narrative inquiry research design as a means to elicit the lived experience of some respected female education leaders in VNU. However, a higher number of male leaders than female ones still fills senior management roles in Vietnamese higher education. This study explores of perspective the leadership styles of women leaders who want to positions of leadership in higher education. Most all of the female leaders have not leadership training at any school, so their leadership and management by experiences. The identification of important factors effect on the educational leadership of these figures will provide insight into the nature of leadership in relation to teaching and learning in Vietnamese higher education. Research will focus on interview as method for exploring the stories of female educational leaders in Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU). The role of female leaders in changing, developing and perfecting valuable structures. Exploring these stories will demonstrate and can be understood the leadership styles of female leader in at VNU.

Keywords: leadership; female education leader; higher education.

1. Introduction

The goal of Vietnam is to become an industrialized and modernized country by 2020. In order to achieve this goal, Vietnamese higher education has changed in response to a variety of educational, political, economic and structural challenges. The national education system of Vietnam includes 4 levels of education and training in the national education system of Vietnam: pre-school education, general education, professional education and higher education. Higher education includes education at college, university, masters and doctoral levels [1].

VNU is the largest comprehensive higher education and research center in Vietnam. The number of teacher and education manager at all levels has been increasing rapidly with

improved qualifications. By the end of 2015 in the whole VNU there were 51 professors, 336 associate professors and 881 PhDs. The number university increasing from 3 in 1993 to 6 in 2017. The number of teachers and education manager attaining standard and higher level of education has been increasing. The quality of education at all levels has improved [2].

Several recent studies in the abroad have set out to examine and analyse the leadership styles of women leaders in higher education in order to better understand and inform models for women who aspire to positions of leadership in higher education. Allan, Gordon and Iverson note the image of the autonomous, solo leader persists in U.S. higher education. This requires a great amount of interpersonal skill and a temperament that is willing to work with others [3]. Eddy and Vander Linden in their study of community college administrators self-reports of their leadership, found that few differences existed in how men and women

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defined their leadership [4]. Sanchez Moreno found that women are flexible and adaptive leaders' style in terms of their leadership style.

There are an increasing number of women leaders in VNU higher education. However, a far higher proportion of males than females still fill these roles. Thus we are going to research the roles of female leaders of educational in VNU, Hanoi.

2. Educational system of Vietnam

The educational system of Viet Nam includes regular and continuing education. There are 4 levels of education and training in the National Educational System of Viet Nam. Pre-school education for children from 3 months to 6 years old; General education consists of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education; Professional education includes secondary professional education and vocational education; Higher education includes education at college, university, master's and doctoral levels.

Normally, College education takes 2 to 3 years, University education takes 4 to 6 years, master level takes 1 to 2 years, doctoral level takes 3 to 4 years. The number of teachers and education managers at all levels has been increasing rapidly with improved qualifications. The number of college teachers increased by 3.1 times and that of university teachers by 1.9 times. By 2010, 100% of teachers at professional education colleges have university or higher qualifications, of which 12% have Master's degrees and 16.8% have PhD degrees. 44% of tertiary education teachers have Master's degrees and 14.4% have PhD degrees. The number of lecturers national wide rose from 32,205 in the year 2002 to 84,109 in the year 2012. The quality of the teaching staff has slightly improved [1,8].

3. Aims of the study

The aim of this study is exploring the stories of respected female educational leaders in VNU. Exploring these stories will demonstrate the lenses through which leadership and leadership styles can be understood and

negotiated. The identification of significant factors impacting on the educational leadership of these figures has generated theory in relation to the nature of leadership, particularly female leadership, in relation to teaching and learning in VNU.

This will inform decision making and practice by identifying ways that both current and potential educational leaders in VNU might develop their own leadership visions, styles and practices. Such knowledge will also improve the quality of professional development for educational leaders in VNU education generally. The timeliness of this study is attested to by the recent attention again being given to the number of women in senior positions in Vietnamese universities

4. Methodology

4.1. Research approach and design

Narrative research was used in this qualitative study as a means to uncover the lived experience of some respected female educational leaders in VNU education. The approach adopted for this study conceptualism narrative research as a means to understand more about individual social change.

Language is our most powerful tool for organizing experience, and indeed, for constituting realities. By recounting their experience, people make sense of their experiences and are able to communicate the ambiguity and complexity of situations as well as their own complex and unpredictable influences and intentions. As her observes the narrative approach reveals the unique story of a person in context [6]. The life experience that infuse the data constitute the primary topic, the true narrative there are assumed to be individual, internal representation of phenomena events, thoughts and feeling to which narrative gives expression [7].

2. Interview

The female educational leaders who have been recognized for their contribution to teaching and learning in higher education. Thus, for the purpose of this study, interviewing is an appropriate technique for the research

issue, and elite interviewing an appropriate subset of interviews as a research tool.

The views of an elite interview as one in which any interviewee is given special, non-standardized treatment that stresses the interviewee's definition of the situation, encourages the interviewee to structure the account and allows the interviewee to introduce a considerable extent their own notions of what is

relevant rather than relying upon the researcher's notions of relevance. Focused interview so that the interviewee can stress his or her definition of, structure, and relevant data related to a situation. The interviewing system for female leaders in VNU based on the questionnaires in Table 1.

Table 1. The Questionnaire used for female leaders Interviewing

Number	Questions
1	What, in your experience, is the distinction, if any, between leadership and management of teaching and learning in higher education?
2	What have been, overall, your main defining aims as a leader of teaching and learning in higher education?
3	Having outlined these aims, what have been the overall values that have been most important to you as an educational leader?
4	Have your values about being an educational leader changed during your career?
5	During your career, have there been any particular incidents or situations that caused you to change your views about leadership of teaching and learning in higher education?
6	How would you describe your leadership style? Is there a particular metaphor or comparison that you would use to describe your vision of your role as a leader of teaching and learning? Do you think others share this view, or are there evidence that they see you differently?
7	Do you think leadership roles and duties should only really reside at the top of an institution, or should these be distributed throughout the organization in different people and in systems that flow through the institution?
8	What has been your vision of the mission and purpose of your organization in relation to teaching and learning?
9	To what extent do you feel your vision of the mission and purpose of your organization in teaching and learning has been achieved?
10	What have been five things that have most helped you to achieve success in teaching and learning in your institution?
11	What have been five things that have most blocked achievement in teaching and learning in your institution?
12	What, in your view, are the most critical 'drivers' of achievement in teaching and learning in higher education today?
13	In the future, what do you think will be the five most important things for a leader in higher education to do to ensure achievement and success in teaching and learning in their institution?
14	What do you think are some of the most challenging issues leaders of teaching and learning tend to face during their careers? How would you advise that future leaders in education should be trained to cope with these?
15	Is there anything else you would like to note for leaders of teaching and learning in higher education in the future? Or any other particular point you wish to note about this case study?

4.3. Data collection

The primary method of collecting data was by elite interviews. The interview schedule was

developed and based on an interview schedule. Questions related to personality, developmental characteristics or how participants grew up to be leaders included in the schedule: "You are from a science discipline background. Tell me

how you came to be a rector, director of member universities and school". The significance of this background to the participant in explaining who they were and how they got to be in their positions could not be ignored. Prior to the interviews, biographical data was gleaned and summarized for background information from searches conducted of the web site the VNU universities. Searches were also conducted of library catalogues and database publications written by participants were read.

5. Results

5.1. Data analysis and representation

The data that has been collected in a way that is both rigorous and scholarly. Their review of several approaches to characterizing data processing, analysis and representation indicated three typical stages:

- Data reduction or description - pulling together the data to a descriptive account.
- Data display, classifying or analysis - expanding and extending the data beyond a descriptive account.
- Conclusion being made and verification, connecting or interpretation - the researcher offers their interpretation of what is going on.

The interviews were mainly exploratory (about 30 minutes). Each interview was conducted, taped and transcribed in order to get as much information. The transcripts provided the basis for data processing, analysis and representation. The process progressed through several consecutive phases: phase 1 transcript verification, phase 2 coding and data reduction, phase 3 profile verification, phase 4 interpreting and drawing conclusions, phase 5 implications and application, phase 6 reflexivity.

A six phase model was used to process, analyse and represent the data:

Phase 1: The tapes were transcribed and transcripts were returned to participants for verification before further work was conducted.

Phase 2: This phase involved numerous readings of each transcript to tease out common

themes and points of difference in the interviews. Reduction of the data was done inductively not deductively, that is, I came to the transcripts with an open attitude looking for what emerged as important or of interest from the text.

Phase 3: In this phase, profiles were returned to the participants for verification before further work was conducted. I was particularly concerned to let the participants choose to allow me to include or to request exclusion of some of the material that, in my opinion bordered on the private and personal, but which helped inform the study.

Phase 4: This phase involved offering my interpretation of what has and is going on in the lives of the participants and how this might inform the nature of leadership by women in relation to teaching and learning in VNU.

Phase 5: The primary question that this phase seeks to address is "what does this tell us about the nature of leadership by women in relation to teaching and learning in VNU and what should we be doing about it?"

Phase 6: Thorough preparation, respect and curiosity, being a good listener and flexibility are key attributes for a good interviewer to develop.

Results should be presented here so that key points from interviewee having common and individual.

5.2. Advice to female aspirants to educational leadership

Advice to female aspirants to educational leadership ranges from the pragmatic detail to the broader systemic issues that aspirants might face. Former rector of Education University advises female aspirants to educational leadership to learn to work systemically and to learn to work the system. Recognizing that leaders need broad based evaluation skills. Office and functional departments (VNU) advises aspirants to get a strong grasp of empirical research, depth of experience in the disciplinary and faculty context and to find a chancellor who values teaching and learning highly.

The experience of some females educational leaders in VNU education has been presented as profiles under the broad themes identified across all interviews: early influences and career trajectory, leadership and management, values, success, barriers and challenges, and finally, advice to female aspirants to leadership. When asked her: how she would advise women aspiring to be future leaders in higher education. She feels it's a bit of a regret at the end of my career that kind of crap behaviors' still going on but I can see it in the next generation. It's not going to change. So when I was a younger woman, I think I always looked pretty young for my age, and now I'm an older woman, well, I'm a silly old fart who's female as well and so I'm not going to win that one. So I've just learnt to disengage in one way but to get on with the job that I think I want to get on with and I get my acknowledgements from elsewhere. I'm the one who's invited to other universities to speak.

Deputy Head office of postgraduate academic affairs thinks higher education faces a future that is more data driven so we are going to need really good data information. I think monitoring, really careful systematic quantitative monitoring, is going to be very, very important. This logically leads to the need to have a strong grasp of empirical research ... people need broad based evaluation skills.

Former vice director academic affairs department thinks that in my experience, there is a significant difference between how women view their careers although it may be changing but certainly with my generation of women than men. Men generally had a more structured view of where they were going. I know that's a generalization but women tend to be a lot more accidental about it and were usually influenced by other things like spouses, and kids and stuff like that.

As with the former director political students' affairs department recognizes that institutional leadership has made a significant difference to her role as well as 'runs scientific and training council in terms of her discipline and faculty experience. She thinks that the

institutional leadership at the vice department academic level is significant enough that aspirants to teaching and Learning roles may think twice about progressing up the ladder if the vice department does not highly value teaching and learning.

While former dean of faculty of management science readily finds the question of advice to female aspirants that they need to learn the art of communication at personal and institutional level and there are forms of communication not just look into their eyes'. You get out there and become a better communicator. I think it's a reality that needs to be acknowledged by those who are leading who will need to bring people in large institutions to a shared sense of value, a shared agreement, a vision and goals and a shared view of what a quality experience of students would be in teaching and learning.

5.3. *The most pertinent lessons*

The data The data from the key themes were mapped to the categories linked to the development of individuals into leaders. The different environments, opportunities and the learning experiences that they experience over the course of their lives.

The role of peers and mentors both in providing a supportive environment and in providing vicarious learning experiences to participants is evident. So, too, is the high value of relationships, collegiality and communication both in the value system of participants but also in their approach to leadership and their advice to participants. While the participants demonstrated willingness, flexibility and competence in taking hold of each opportunity for leadership presented to them, there was little evidence of consideration given to the planning of their careers. They had learned both how to work systemically and how to work the system. They learned how to understand and use empirical data, how to chair and run committees.

6. Conclusions

This research has identified where some respected female figures in educational leadership came from and what has shaped their leadership practices and values.

Guidance and practical advice for potential educational leaders has been derived from this study as has guidance and practical advice for others in the VNU education sector who can influence the sector in ways that will allow aspiring female leaders to better forget their own pathway to making a difference for those who seek to learn in the universities.

Women still play a very small part in the senior university leadership of VNU education. Teaching and learning in VNU education is the poor cousin to research and this has an impact on the support for, and interest in, teaching and learning at both the institutional and local level. Women in this study observed that the marginalization of women was still apparent in VNU education. Female aspirants to educational leadership face a number of contextual issues and realities. Participants indicated the importance of gaining a doctorate and of having depth of experience in the faculty context both as academics and leaders. The management skills are articulate communicator, organized, knowledgeable about higher education and leadership skills.

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