The Influence of Leadership in Academia on The Standard of Teaching in Malaysian Private Universities

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Abstract
The purpose of this research is to analyse the role played by academic leaders in improving the teaching quality in Malaysian private universities. As the future of the country's economic growth is dependent on the quality of education offered by private universities, focusing on teaching quality can improve the future of Malaysian students and determine the sustainability of private universities. The target population was academicians from three private universities in Nilai, Malaysia. This study employed a qualitative research approach. The thematic method was utilised to analyse data which was gathered through an in-depth interview with seven lecturers. In addition to that, an in-depth understanding of the subject matter was obtained through literature reviews. The findings of this study show that academic leaders play a key role in increasing the motivation level of lecturers to improve the quality of education provided in private universities. Respondents assert that academic leaders need to provide a clear definition of goals, conduct regular performance evaluations, elevate credibility by mentoring, and present rewards for good teaching quality. This study raises an opportunity for future researchers to study the challenges faced by academic leaders in improving the quality of teaching in private universities. Another beneficial research would be to conduct an analysis of leadership practices in private universities which are financially stable and progressing well.
Keywords: Academic Leadership, Teaching Quality, Private Universities

Introduction
Universities have become business oriented and education reforms are necessary to improve students' standard. The role played by academicians in determining the quality of education delivered in institutions of higher education cannot be undermined. Academicians, particularly in Malaysia, have been urged to enhance their skills in order to create graduates who are competent (Imran, 2015). The internet which provides a vast amount of readily available information, has affected the roles played by academicians. Teaching methods used

by academicians at face-to-face classes in universities have seen tremendous changes over time. Private institutions are under pressure to evolve and improve pedagogical practices (Lin et al., 2015). Nevertheless, only a small percentage of academicians are making an effort to evolve from being sages who know all to facilitators who discover methods to maximize student learning even though much emphasis has been put on student-centred learning. Academicians seem to find it challenging to accept that total output from them does not maximise student learning.

This shows the need for training and encouragement to help academicians to assume the role of facilitators who structure meaningful tasks that will develop knowledge and social skills. Okoroji et al (2014) state that leaders play an important role in providing positive and constructive feedback to develop academicians' skills in this area. It can clearly be concluded that the success of organisations is determined by strong leaders. These leaders need to have the ability to achieve organisational goals by manipulating the attitudes of employees (Ali & Rehman, 2016). This study attempts to support the notion that the leadership styles practised in higher academic institutions play an important role in determining the quality of education delivered.

This is a significant research because it explores critical factors which affect the quality of education provided by private universities. Numerous studies have been carried out to analyse major factors which influence the satisfaction level of students in private universities. However, there seems to be a gap in determining the motivation level of academicians to improve the quality of education. It is, therefore, necessary to understand how quality of education can be improved by analysing academicians' current style of delivery.

This study also attempts to create awareness regarding the important roles played by academic leaders in enhancing academicians' skills and increasing their motivation level to provide a wholesome learning experience to students. This will improve the reputation of private institutions and give rise to positive word of mouth, which is powerful in increasing the enrolment rate in private universities. The findings of this study would also give suggestions to academic leaders as to how guidance and training can be provided to enable academicians to improve their style of delivery and provide a wholesome learning experience to students. The objectives of this qualitative study is to:

- Explore the current impact that academic leaders have on enhancing the teaching quality in private universities
- Explore the steps that need to be taken by academic leaders in future, to improve the teaching quality in private universities

Literature Review

There is vast amount of information and studies carried out to analyse leadership skills that can be applied to improve the performance of employees in various business sectors. However, current research efforts seem to have overlooked the importance of leadership influence in improving the teaching and learning experience in universities (Hofmeyer et al., 2015). Gaining clarity on the impact that leaders have in private academic institutions can in turn improve the quality of education provided and student enrolment. This knowledge will help develop leaders who are able to influence academicians to practice innovation when imparting knowledge to students.

Impact of Leaders on the Delivery Style of Academicians
Previous research has proven that academic leadership has a substantial impact on improving the teaching and learning quality in institutions which in turn affects student performance; academic leadership is considered to be the second major influence after classroom teaching (Cruickshank, 2017). Academic leaders are under pressure to ensure changes such as personal enhancement and individual transformation take place, as higher education is facing complex managerial issues (Fahimirad et al., 2016).

In the current demanding business environment, various challenges are faced to remain competitive; therefore, innovation in teaching is essential for both organisational and individual success (Imran, 2015). Academic leaders need to assume the role of mentors to motivate lecturers to enhance their teaching skills. This cannot be achieved by giving a free hand in the delivery of content.For greater control over the quality of classroom delivery, leaders must organise peer review sessions and class observations. This could be the main reason for the lack of guidance from leaders as class observations can create friction among academicians and are time consuming.

Hallinger in Cruickshank (2017) who provides a review of research on school leadership states that leaders have an indirect or mediated positive effect on student achievement by developing leadership capacities of staff members and creating a positive school climate that promotes teaching and learning. Effective and efficient leaders need to portray emotional intelligence and encourage academicians to perform effectively (Bryman in Fahimirad, Idris, & Kotamjani, 2016).   Lecturers have a better understanding as to why they are instructed to carry out a certain task and they are committed to work conscientiously to achieve the set goals when leaders are resonant (Hofmeyer, et al., 2015).

The success of academic institutions depends on teaching innovation, and this factor is solely under the control of lecturers. Support from leaders can increase academicians' motivation to be innovative and explore various teaching methods. The appointment of university leaders is based on their qualifications and effective teaching practices. These leaders have a strong control over the academic programmes offered. As they are accountable for the fate of their institutions, they need to be aware that they have an impact on students' progress and learning (Fahimirad et al., 2016). Leaders need to set the priorities of subordinates by developing shared beliefs and values to ensure that academic institutions evolve in the current user-led, globalised market (Black, 2015).
In addition to that, leaders need to have the ability to look forward and enhance credibility. This needs to be done by distributing teaching load fairly and by providing rewards in a timely manner. In institutions of higher learning, adopting a collaborative leadership style is most appropriate as it has the ability to build cooperative networks and give rise to diverse views (Hofmeyer, et al., 2015). Leader's need be committed to train lecturers in order to provide a conducive learning environment which encourages creation of active minds, interaction with peers and construction of new visions (Bidabadi et al., 2016).

Current Common Delivery Method
The preferred choice of delivery in universities is the lecture method. The main reason for this is that is that lecturing allows greater control over the delivery of content as lecturers are the

main source of information (Abdulbaki et al., 2018). It is also a simple and direct way to pass information to students.

During lectures, learners need to be obedient recipients of knowledge and it is not a requirement for them to provide any output. The effectiveness of depending on lecturers alone, without expecting any feedback from students is questionable (Bidabadi et al., 2016). This is because lectures create learners with poor motivation as students are only expected to be good note-takers instead of problem solvers who use critical thinking skills. When the lecture method is chosen, most students are deprived of the opportunity to share their thoughts and defend their personal opinions.

While handling large classrooms, most academicians in private universities resort to using the lecture method to deliver content. The main reason is lectures can be utilised to deliver any form of content and are easy to plan (Abdulbaki et al., 2018). Less time is needed for preparation of lessons as lecturers only need to rely on themselves. Little thought has to be put in on how the students can be involved in the learning process. Most lecturers rely on PowerPoint slides which are easier to prepare than supplementary teaching aids which need to be prepared if other methods are chosen.

Ways to Improve Teaching Quality
When academic leaders focus more of their influence on improving the quality of teaching and learning in their institutions, student outcomes are more like to be enhanced; whereas, leaders who failed to prioritise teaching quality have been criticised for not using their influence appropriately (Cruickshank, 2017). Higher performing institutions had leaders who communicated learning goals clearly although there may be multiple conflicting tasks. Achieving these goals are prioritised to become part of everyday practices.

Universities which have become business oriented are affected by high expectations and changing demands from the student population (Fahimirad et al., 2016). All stakeholders expect a more wholesome teaching and learning experience which caters to the needs of industry's expectations of having more outcome-based performance.

Good planning with the students' needs in mind is essential for effective teaching to take place. Lack of innovation causes the outcome of lessons to be far from satisfactory in universities. Therefore, academicians need to maximise student participation and involvement by diversifying teaching methods. Learner-centered teaching methods have repeatedly proven to give better results than traditional teacher-centered approach.
As shown in the 'Wheel of Instructional Choice' (Appendix 1), there are twenty-nine other teaching methods which can be used by lecturers. Vikoo in Dorgu (2015) states that the three main categories in which teaching methods fall under are:
1) Cognitive Development Methods which include discussion method, questioning method, team teaching method, recitation method and field trip method
2) Affective Development Methods which include modelling method, simulation method, dramatic method and role-playing method
3) Psychomotor Development Methods which include inquiry method, discovery method, process approach method, demonstration method, experimentation method,

programmed learning method, assignment method, project method, microteaching method and mastery learning.

After analysing the content which needs to be delivered, the number of students and the capability of students, the above-mentioned teaching methods can be combined and developed further to cater to the needs of students with different learning styles. Research has proven that the most effective approach is the mixed method, where the focus is student centred combined with teacher centred (Bidabadi et al., 2016). However, the main barriers to using the mixed method are lecturers' behaviour, lecturers' outlook and institutions' regulations. Most of time, self-imposed procedures complicate the delivery of knowledge. In the long run, this deprives students and lecturers of creativity (Fahimirad et al., 2016).

Underpinning Theories
Locke's Goal-Setting Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory
Locke's Goal-setting Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory have proven to be very useful in analysing how they affect employees' working styles and their satisfaction level. Locke and Latham (2016) stress that performance is affected by goals as they act as an energizing factor, assist in improving focus and encourage completion of goal-relevant activities, encourage persistence and affect action. Goals are the foundation for motivation; therefore, behaviour is directed according to the motivation level of individuals. According to the theory, two conditions, which are goal acceptance and goal commitment, must be fulfilled in order for goals to influence performance (Wong and Low, 2018). This theory shows that the motivation level of employees to change their teaching style can be influenced by leaders in academic institutions. Therefore, lecturers must be clear about the goals set to enhance the teaching and learning experience. Regular feedback regarding performance and task completion can help to further reinforce understanding of the expected behaviour.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory stresses that when individuals believe that their performance will give desirable rewards, they make choices and are motivated to put in effort (Purvis et al., 2015). Vroom posits that people place importance on personal gains and are motivated to perform only when they perceive that there are benefits in performing well. These benefits include both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Lloyd and Mertens (2018) state that an employee's motivation force is related to the following positive factors:

1) Effort – employees work hard to enjoy material goods and maintain social status
2) Performance – employees' confidence level is higher when they have sufficient experience to achieve goals set by organisations and they believe they will be paid accordingly.
3) Reward – monetary rewards provide intrinsic value for employees to perform better as wages provide a sense of security and stability.

According to Wong and Low (2018), unconsciously motivation influences behaviour and causes people to behave in a certain manner to satisfy their lower-level needs. When these needs are fulfilled, they strive to fulfil higher-level needs. Similarly, employees tend to work better when their physiological needs are fulfilled. They need a safe and secure environment and a competitive compensation and benefits package. These are necessary to increase employees' motivation at work.

Therefore, these theories reinforce the belief that leaders have the power to change lecturers' performance by giving timely feedback, setting clear goals, and providing a competitive reward system.

Conceptual Framework
Based on the information gathered from the literature review, this study proposes the following conceptual framework which is a formative construct.
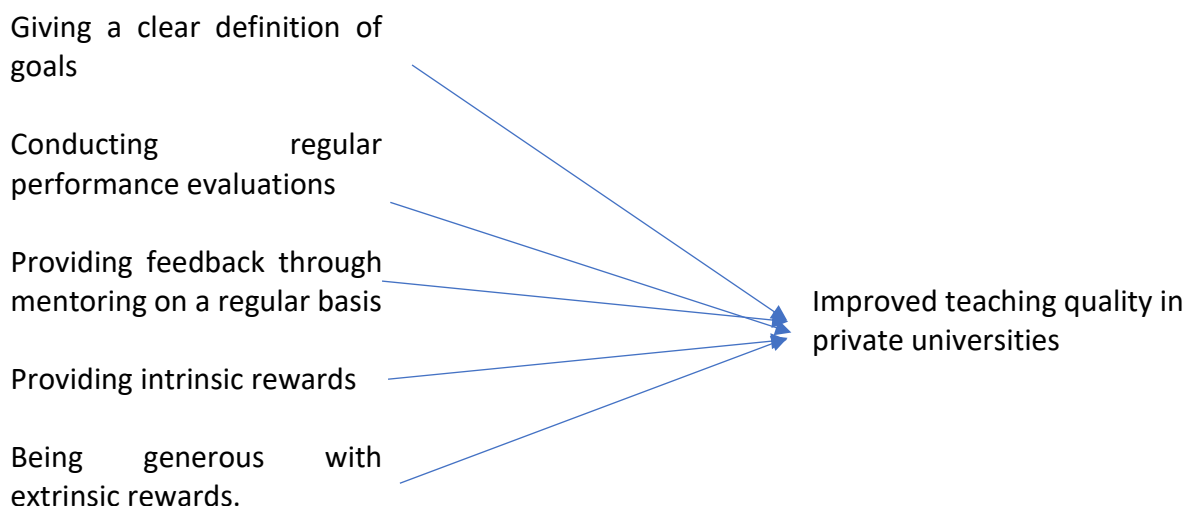
Giving a clear definition of goals

Conducting regular performance evaluations

Providing feedback through mentoring on a regular basis

Providing intrinsic rewards

Being generous with extrinsic rewards.

Improved teaching quality in private universities

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology
Convenience sampling was utilized to gather data from seven lecturers from private universities in Malaysia. This study used a qualitative approach whereby in-depth interviews were conducted to better understand how academic leaders affect the teaching quality in private universities. For the purpose of gathering comprehensive information, the interviewer asked the participants a series of 12 semi-structured questions during the study's interview. The 12 semi-structured questions were derived from the literature review. The qualitative research interviews were used to describe and comprehend the subject matter based on the relevant phenomena that are being investigated.

Based on the research questions and the theoretical foundation of the study, it would be suitable to use three types of analysis which are content analysis, framework analysis and colour coding. The first method used is content analysis. Content analysis helps in reducing large amounts of data and making sense of them. According to (Kawulich, 2004, p.97), content analysis involves "creating codes, applying codes to texts, testing the intercoder reliability, creating a table of units of analysis and conducting statistical analysis of the units". In the context of this research, answers to interview questions were classified, summarized and tabulated. Research questions were used as a guideline to analyse how well respondents' answers were aligned to objectives of research (Galletta, 2012). Sunday (2019) states that content analysis can be done on two levels which are descriptive and interpretative. In descriptive analysis, the focus is on what the data is, whereas for interpretative analysis focus in on what the data means. The second method is framework analysis. Framework analysis consists of a number of stages which are 'familiarization, identifying a thematic framework,

coding, charting, mapping and interpretation' (Lacity & Janson, 1994). Looking for patterns, themes and relationships between different sources of data is necessary to ensure validity of findings. The third method is colour coding. A system of 'color-coding datum' was used to code sources of data. Similar themes emerged within the tabulated responses. The categories which significantly made up the typology were used to prepare the final report. The data for each interview were re-coded as themes emerged within each of the broader categories. The data analysis was enhanced with the use of NVivo, a Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) computer software package. This software reduces manual tasks and allows the researcher to have more time to "discover tendencies, recognize themes and derive conclusions" (Hilal and Alabri, 2013, p.182). Using NVivo improved the quality of research as it enabled the analysis of qualitative data to be done in an easier and clearer manner. This helped to yield more professional results.

Results
Respondents have stressed that academic leaders create awareness of the vision of universities for teaching quality by conducting meetings. Planning of course content is given serious consideration as the content needs to be in line with the overall programme learning outcomes and course learning outcomes which are approved by the standards set by Malaysian Quality Assurance. Teaching methods, however, are chosen based on the lecturers' individual preferences.

Some of the responses received from the respondents are as follows
> (…) By discussing in the meeting and inviting experts to give talks/workshops.

> (…) Soliciting input from all staff members during meetings…Collaborating with the SLT in drafting a school vision statement……. Presenting the draft to their subordinates for discussion and implementation…. Unveiling the vision statement to stake holders.

> (…) Highlighting them in meetings.

> (…) During meetings, lecturers are advised to be punctual and handle students with care. Teaching methods are not given enough attention.

> (…) The Programme learning outcomes are correlated to the University Vision and Mission. On the other hand, Course learning outcomes are correlated to the Programme learning outcomes. The outcome-based education ensures that the teaching and learning practices measure the attainment of the course learning outcomes and thus the correlates to the vision.

> (…) Highlight during meetings; being very serious and transparent about their vision.

Respondents strongly feel that training is essential to improve teaching quality. Most lecturers are required to make an effort on their own to attend courses to improve teaching skills. Academic leaders have tried to encourage lecturers to attend training sessions but this is not compulsory.

Participants provided the following responses

(…) By encouraging them to attend training

(…) Workshops and training programmes should be given. Lecturers could fill a form regarding areas they wish to be trained

(…) By encouraging lecturers to make an effort to attend external training programmes to improve their skills.

(…) Send them for relevant training sessions regarding current teaching practice

Besides training, some of the respondents also mentioned that peer review, lecturer exchange programmes and peer observation are among the important criteria for enhancing teaching quality.

Comments given by respondents include the following:

(…) Pursue post graduate education qualifications…. Encouraging peer reviews…. Encourage lecturer exchange programme.

(…) One to one meeting or sending lecturers for short teaching courses. Peers can share or give tips on how to teach.

(…) We have introduced the PEER Observation of Teaching (POT) in which subject experts are assigned to peer review their colleagues teaching in order to provide regular feedbacks by the subject experts. That will improve the quality of teaching practices.

Figure 2 is a tree map which shows the responses received regarding the importance of training in improving teaching quality:
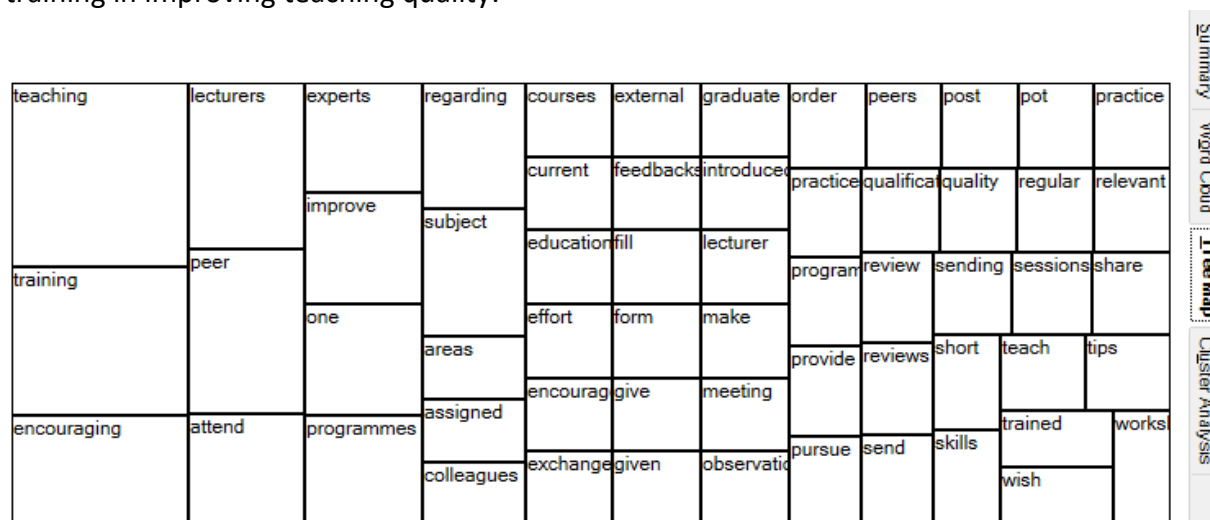

Figure 2: Tree map - Importance of training in improving teaching quality

Respondents have clearly indicated that innovation in teaching can be improved by encouraging lecturers to attend conferences and workshops. In addition to that, observing sample classes conducted by experts and experienced peers can help in practising student centred activities.

Some comments provided by respondents are as follows:

(…) By attending conferences and peer reviews

(…) Encourage student centred teaching… Implement team teaching.

(…) Activities outside the classroom /Field visits

(…) Lecturers should attend workshops in their field so that they may learn of new techniques. They can keep updated regarding the current trends and issues that may affect their subject.

(…) We have provided examples / samples course of innovative and diversify course content from other international reputed institutions so that the lecturers can come out with more innovative methods of teaching.

(…) Lecturers are advised to attend external training programmes to make an effort to improve themselves.

(…) Show them real classroom teaching using innovative methods to indicate the effectiveness of such methods.

The following word cloud shows the importance of innovation in improving teaching quality:

Figure 3: Word cloud - Importance of innovation in improving teaching quality

Regular training programmes have not been provided by universities. Lecturers are encouraged to training programmes once or twice a year. Emphasis has not been placed on regularly improving lecturers' skills by providing internal training programmes which are made compulsory.

The following feedback was given by some respondents

(…) We do employ professionals or experienced academics to provide training in the relevant field to improve the teaching practices. This is done about twice a year.

(…) Invite consultancy company representatives to conduct training annually.

(…) At least once a year

(…) As often as necessary, more so when there is teaching staff without experience or without a teaching qualification e. g. those from an industrial background.

(…) There should be at least four training sessions annually

(…) Not sure. None during my teaching period. But I think every three years will be good.

(…) Lecturers are encouraged to attend seminars which give general industry requirements. Regular training programmes are not provided

Figure 4 is a cluster analysis that shows the responses received with regard to the frequency of internal training programmes to improve teaching quality:

Figure 4: Cluster analysis - Frequency of internal training programmes to improve teaching quality

Lecturers are required to design a clear course outline which fulfils the requirements of Malaysian Quality Assurance. This course outline is checked at the beginning of every semester. There is no follow up as to whether the plans are followed through until the end.

Responses received are as follows
(…) These standards are set by MQA and lecturers need to be informed by the institutions of the requirements of preparing course outlines.
(…) Lecturers are required to design a course outline before the beginning of a semester.
(…) By writing lesson plan using course outline.
(…) By following the course outline
(…) Implement Course File for every module taught. Appoint a senior member of the team to be their mentor who upholds quality assurance across the department
(…) Have a clearly defined and detailed course plan to follow.

(…) We have introduced a standard template for the teaching plan for the stipulated duration (ex: 14 weeks). Lecturers are required to submit the Planned "Teaching Plan" for the 14 weeks at the beginning of the semesters. Also, on completion, lecturers are required to submit the actual teaching plan at the end of the semester.

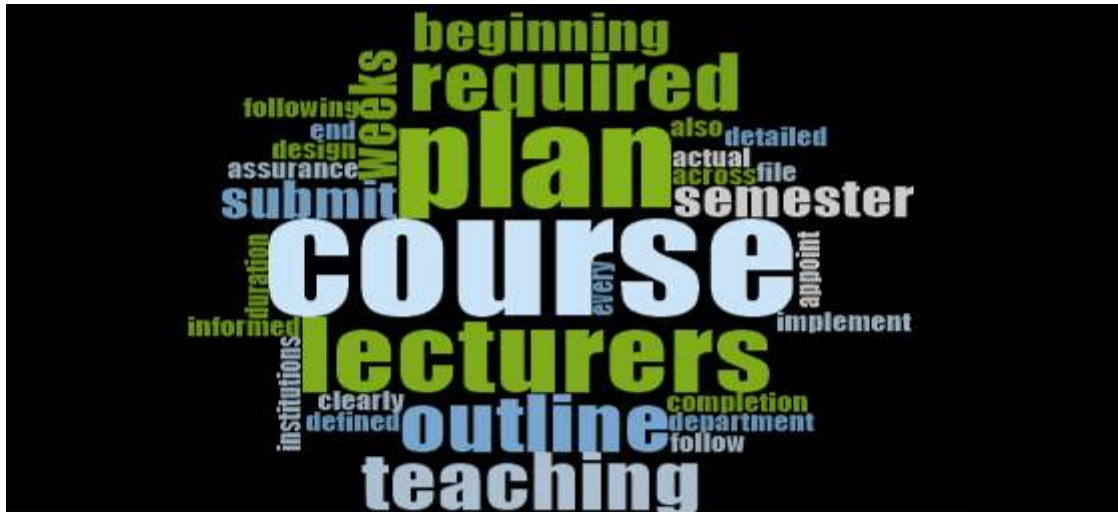Figure 5 is a word cloud showing the main responses received regarding preparation of course outlines.

Figure 5: Word cloud - Preparation of course outlines

Most academic leaders rely on administrative staff to distribute evaluation forms to obtain feedback from students regarding teaching quality. Academic leaders rarely speak with students and rarely conduct class observations.

Responses provided are as follows

(…) By going through course and lecturer evaluation feedback forms from students.

(…) Appoint an administrative assistant to carry out evaluation exercise by distributing evaluation forms.

(…) In most cases, they act as facilitators. Examiners and they be required to prepare documents on requirements/changes in evaluation.

(…) We do participate in the teaching evaluation through the discussion of peer observation of teaching Reports and feedbacks received from the students.

(…) Academic leaders do not interact with the students. They help design the evaluation forms.

(…) Through class observations

Figure 6 is a tree map showing feedback received regarding evaluation
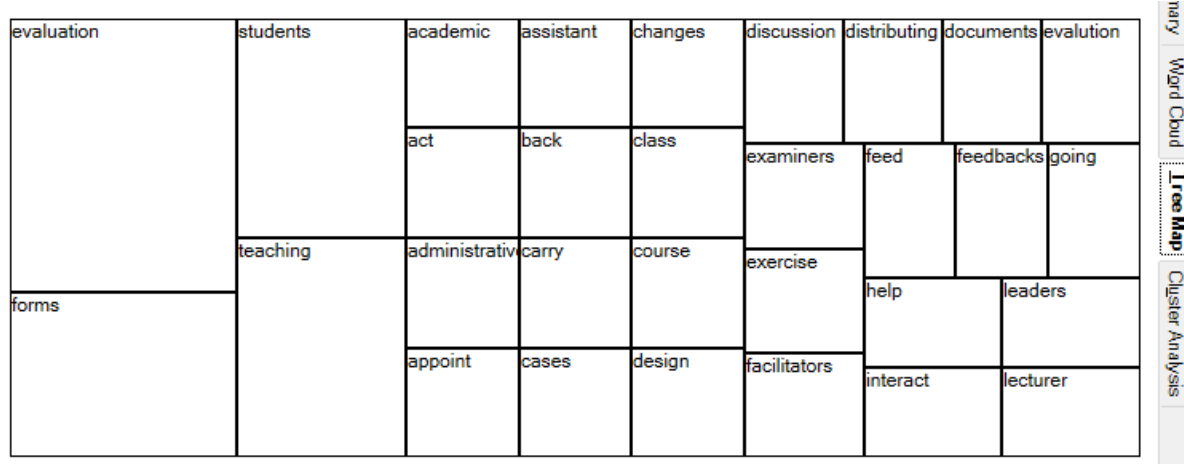

Figure 6: Tree map - Evaluation

Academic leaders provide feedback based on evaluation forms completed by students. Individual face-to-face meetings are held with lecturers to enable the lecturers to view the results of the evaluation.

Feedback received from the respondents are as follows
> (…) Yes. We inform the outcome of the evaluation report through the short meeting with the lecturer in the presence of the observer.
> (…) Yes. Feedback is based on the evaluation results.
> (…) Yes, this is mandatory.
> (…) Yes. This is the norm.
> (…) Yes, definitely.

Only final exam papers are moderated by peers. This is done to ensure the questions are set according to course objectives and expected outcomes. Academic leaders do not participate in this moderation process. As for coursework, the assessment methods are chosen by lecturers and these assessments are not moderated.

Some of the respondents have stated the following
> (…) Yes, ensure the standards are achieved. Only final exam papers are moderated by peers.
> (…) None during my teaching years. Moderators just check the suitability of final exam questions.
> (…) Not sure. Final exam papers are checked by peers.
> (…) Yes, constantly for final exams. Papers are moderated by peers.
> (…) Yes. We appoint Moderators to moderate ALL the assessment of the subject. However thorough evaluation is not in place for all the assessments
> (…) Moderators are appointed to check final exam paper for each course. The quality of overall coursework and other assessments are not monitored.
> (…) Yes, sometimes twice in a year. Exam papers are moderated by peers.

The tree map below (Figure 7) shows the responses received regarding moderation of exam papers and course work
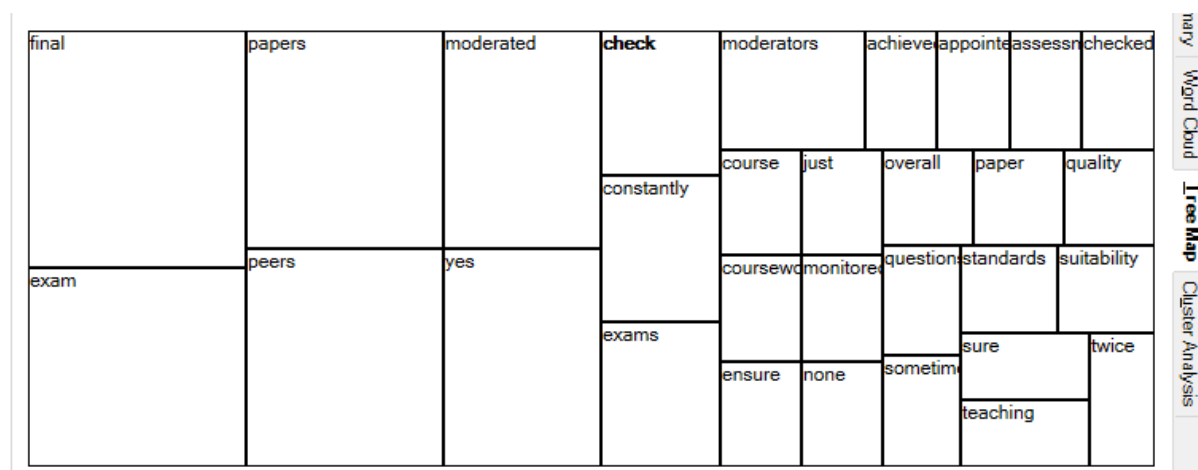
Figure 7: Tree map - Moderation of exam papers and course work

Diversification of assessment methods is dependent on lecturers' preferences. There is an attempt on the academic leaders' part to provide training and highlight that assessments should not be solely paper-based.

The following responses were received from respondents

> (…) Lab Practical Exams, Presentation, Research Project are completed based on lecturers' preference.
> (…) Appoint a subject matter expert to assess the level and quality of the assessment and lecturers are expected to work independently.
> (…) This is left to the lecturers after the training. However, peer evaluations and mentoring is included when necessary.
> (…) This is based on the lecturers' own efforts
> (…) Conduct training sessions to look into the various assessment practices and lecturers decide which is or are most suitable for their cohort of students.

Two respondents mentioned that diversification of assessment methods are discussed during meetings with the academic leaders or adopted from the best practices from renowned institutions . They have mentioned that:

> (…) During the department meeting, the best practices adopted by the reputed institutions in the diversification of assessment practices are discussed and good practices are adopted by lecturers for the respective subjects.
> (…) By discussing in academic leaders meeting

The tree map below (Figure 8) summarises the responses received regarding diversification of assessment methods.
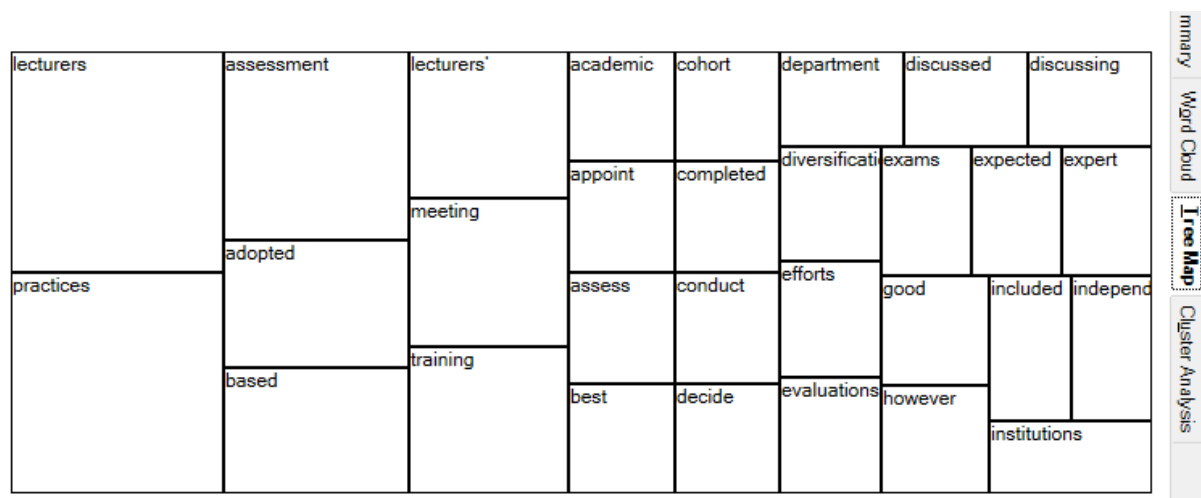

Figure 8: Tree Map - Diversification of assessment methods.

From the responses received, it can be summarised that academic leaders provide support when challenges are faced by lecturers especially when handling students. However, more support is needed in terms of course content.

> (…) Yes. We do provide support the lecturers facing challenges by sharing our experiences. On the other hand, it is normal practice to assign a subject expert who had experience in teaching the subject to support the lecturers facing challenges in teaching.
> (…) Yes. Lecturers are advised how to handle students more than course content.
> (…) Yes, most definitely.

Figure 9 is a word cloud showing the responses received regarding support received from leaders when facing challenges.
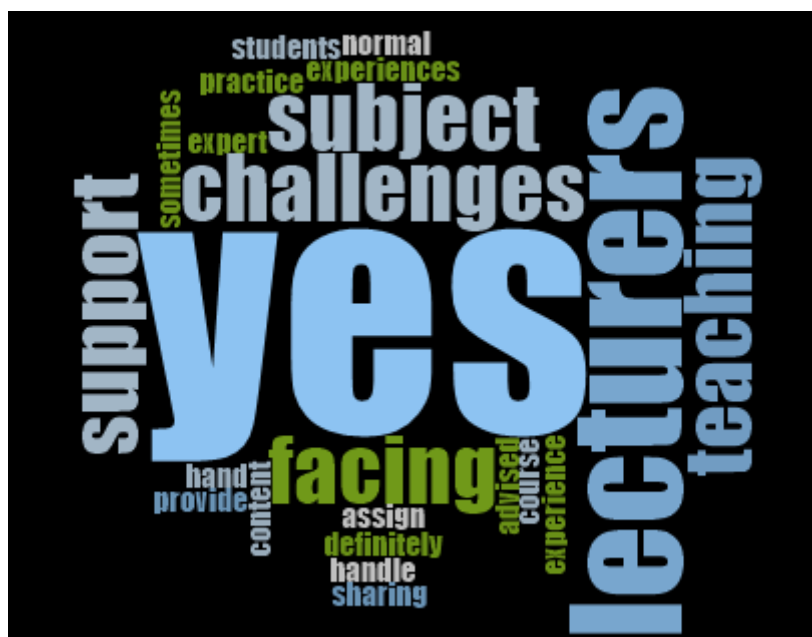
Figure 9: Word cloud - Support received from leaders when facing challenges.

Most academicians state that rewards are mostly monetary which come in the form of increment and bonus. Some also believe that lecturers who are promoted are usually those who focus on improving quality of teaching.

The interviewed academicians shared the following responses:

(…) Currently there is no award is being awarded for the good teaching performance. However, the good performance of the lecturers are reflected in the KPI appraisal which can lead to a better increment.

(…) Yearly appraisal and increment can be better for those who are evaluated well by students.

(…) Bonuses, salary increments, promotions.

(…) Salary Increment / Promotions

Only one respondent said that rewards are not provided for the good teaching performance. In his words:

(…) No rewards provided because teaching has been considered as a noble profession. The following tree map (Figure 10) provides further information regarding rewards received for teaching quality:

Figure 10: Tree map - Rewards received for teaching quality

Most lecturers claim that rewards are necessary as rewards motivate them to keep giving their best.

Respondents have mentioned the following:

> (…) Yes, of course. Rewards are necessary. They should be clearly stated to provide motivation for lecturers to continuously improve themselves.

> (…) Yes, as a major form of appreciation which in turn motivates one to move forward in being innovative and more student oriented.

> (…) Yes. Definitely, it should come with monetary benefits and it is good motivation.

> (…) Yes. Reward is a form of appreciation. It is a form of motivation for others

> (…) Definitely. The reward does not have to be monetary; it can include recognitions and promotions. Lecturers need motivation.

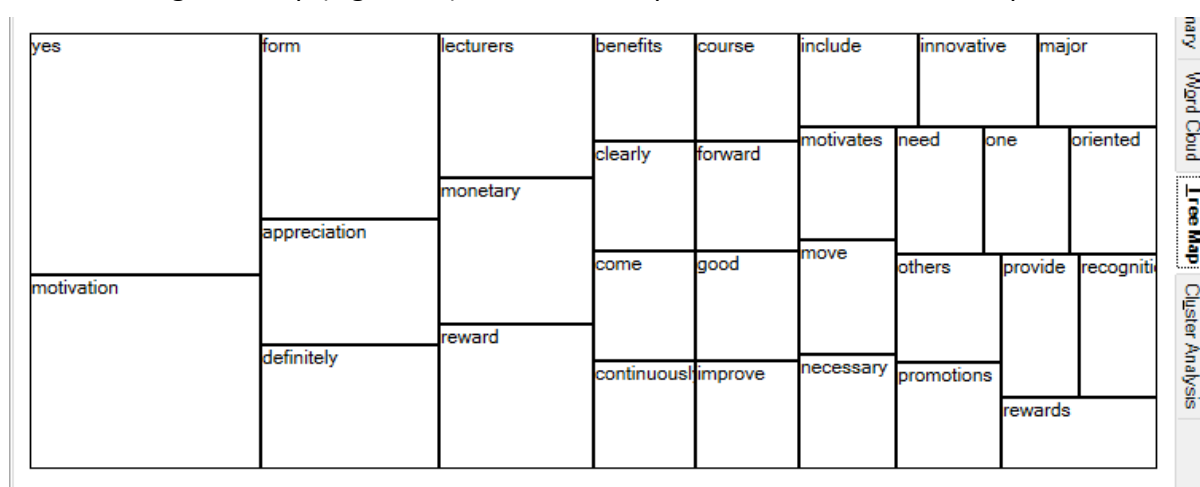The following tree map (Figure 11) reflects the importance of rewards for respondents:

Figure 11: Tree map - Importance of rewards for good teaching quality

Discussion

Teaching quality in private universities can be improved by academic leaders by paying attention to the following factors

Clear Definition of goals

Students' interest needs to be stimulated by developing challenging courses, encouraging discussions, including experiential as well as action-oriented activities, and promoting group work (Paolini, 2015). By focusing on these factors, lecturers can encourage student centred learning and build a competent community of learners. These goals need to be clearly articulated by academic leaders to encourage lecturers to design courses and plan their lessons accordingly.

Regular Performance Evaluations

Academic leaders need to conduct regular performance evaluations to understand students' perceptions of how effective the lecturers and the courses are. The results of these evaluations should be shared promptly to enable lecturers to improve their teaching methods. This is because the feedback received helps lecturers understand which aspects of their teaching should be improved to give better results (Paolini, 2015).

Frequent Mentoring

Mentoring assists in retaining academicians, improving productivity, increasing their level of commitment and enabling new employees adapt (Irby, Lynch, & Boswell, 2017). Experienced mentors should provide guidance and support to enable academicians understand their own strengths and weaknesses.

Intrinsic Rewards

Intrinsic motivation exists within individuals and needs to be harnessed by supportive leaders who have the capability to make the best out of employees' strengths. Engaging in behavior that creates intrinsic motivation is essential. It is influenced by social contexts as intrinsic rewards affect the employees' autonomy and competence (Legault, 2016). This can motivate lecturers to learn new techniques, develop their skills and grow in their career.

Extrinsic Rewards

Extrinsic motivation is performance that is dependent on attaining an outcome that is connected to the action. It is considered to be helpful in promoting action for those who cannot be intrinsically motivated (Legault, 2016). Financial rewards have always been a major reason for employees wanting to be part of an organisation. In order to make a meaningful impact, wage incentives need to be supported by positive human interactions. Monetary rewards have proven to enhance intrinsic value for employees as a higher salary induces a sense of stability and security which gives a higher status in society (Lloyd, & Mertens, 2018).

Academic leaders can improve the teaching practices of academicians by giving careful consideration to the factors highlighted. Motivating employees can prove to be a difficult task. Therefore, all these steps need to be taken by focusing on communication efficacy and positive communication climate.

Conclusion

This study attempts to reinforce the notion that the leaders in higher academic institutions play an important role in determining the quality of education provided. There is a necessity to study the reasons behind the working styles of academicians in private universities as academicians in Malaysia have been encouraged to enhance their teaching skills and structure meaningful classroom activities in order to meet the current market demands. Leaders play an essential role in determining the success of academic institutions. Therefore, this study will give a clear indication of how academicians are influenced by their leaders.

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