

College Deans' Leadership Effectiveness in Jimma University in Focus

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which college deans in Jimma University are effective in their leadership. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches, emphasizing more on descriptive survey method. The participants of the study include 192 instructors, 39 department heads, 5 deans and one top official of the University. These informants were selected on the basis of stratified and purposive sampling techniques. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data from these participants. The collected data were analyzed using appropriate quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. The results of the study unveiled that deans' leadership effectiveness in the University was not up to the desired level as measured by the three major leadership dimensions considered in the study. The study further revealed that deans' leadership effectiveness was hampered by both personal and institutional factors. Hence, it was recommended that the University arrange relevant trainings for the incumbents decentralize power and make colleges autonomous on important academic and administrative issues.*

Key words: *autonomy, education quality, institutional diversity, leadership effectiveness, power*

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Background of the Study

Education in general and higher education in particular is the hall mark of a nation's development as it is crucial in producing skilled labor force that accelerates the pace of the nation's social and economic advancement (UNESCO, 2005; TGE, 1994; Psacharopoulos 1985; Meulemester and Rochat, 1995). Principally, for developing countries education is particularly important in their fight against poverty. With this understanding, therefore, most nations today are investing much on expanding higher education (Bloom, Canning and Chan, 2006).

Because of the huge investment in higher education, the need to hold higher educational institutions (HEIs) accountable for measurable performance is also becoming crucial. The increase in competition for scarce resources and decrease in public trust in HEIs practice and performance has resulted in unprecedented demands for HEIs to demonstrate their effectiveness and efficiency, which to a great extent, lies on the performance of administrators in general and academic deans in particular (Heck, Johnsrud and Rosser, 2000).

Academic deans are among key personnel up on whom the performance of HEIs rests. They are expected to play a leading role in providing an important foundation to their institutions. They are expected to play a key role in, developing policies, coordinating unit (department) works, creating favorable work and in environment. They mobilize and utilize resources efficiently. They and effectively, encourage staff professional development and promoting research. In short, they are responsible for encouraging practices that improve and sustain the quality of education and training that their institution offers to students and other community members (Wolverton et al., 2001). Academic deans are also responsible for fostering good teaching, representing their college, and providing direction and recruiting strong faculty (Gardner, 1992). Astin and Astin (2000) in the same way stated that college deans have important influences on the success of their organization as their leadership has value to create a supportive environment where people can grow, thrive and live in peace with one another.

Despite the fact that effective leadership of deans has a potential influence on the success of HEIs, there is little evidence on approaches to evaluate the effectiveness of HEIs leadership in general (Astin and Scherrei, 1980) and deans leadership in particular (Wolverton and Gmelch, 1990). Heck, Johnsrad and Rosser (2000) investigated higher education leadership effectiveness and concluded that minimal empirical research exists to determine the best method to assess their performance. They attributed this to lack of consistent and reliable assessment tools. In addition holding HEIs accountable for measurable outcome is a fairly new practice. The term “effectiveness” is also elusive and the elusiveness of the term effectiveness by itself.

Currently, the most common approach for evaluating deans’ leadership effectiveness is a role-based approach. According to role-based approach effectiveness is deans are effective in their leadership when they could manage to play leadership responsibility roles expected of them in an appropriate manner. Leadership in organizational contexts is obviously complex and multidimensional (Yukl, 1989). The existing literature suggests that the dean’s role can be defined in terms of several different models and views. This means that it would be erroneous to suggest only certain criteria. Visible indicators must be included with a particular set of constructs that define the role (Heck and Marcoulides, 1996).

According to Fish (2004) and Gmlech and Wolverton (2000), the role of academic dean has become more complex and demanding. Prior to the 1990s, the deans’ role was to provide guidance and support for students and faculty. However, presently, deans are responsible for all aspects of academic affairs in addition to budgeting, recruiting, curriculum development and faculty development and retention. Academic deans also have the responsibility of external fund raising and alumni relations (Montez and Gmelch, 2000). Specially, in developing countries where HEIs are expected to transform the society with meager resources provided from the government, deans are expected to device mechanisms through which they can secure additional fund which helps them to realize their vision and mission.

In addition, success of HEIs can be affected by the relationship that exists between and among staff members. Where there is a healthy relationship among staff, there is a better organizational performance and vice versa. Besides, due to their middle level placement in higher education structure, deans are in the centre of controversy, conflict and debate. This implies that deans have to play the role of coalition builder, negotiator and facilitator (Rosser, Jhonsrud and Heck, 2003). Gmelch et al. (2002) also point out that deans are expected to play the roles of persuader, negotiator or arbitrator, convincing faculty to endorse central administration policy. Deans, therefore, should provide resources and put maximum effort to create healthy relationship among staff members and maximize the performance of their institution.

Moreover, academic deans are expected to play roles that are crucial for the achievement of organizational goals. They have the authority to chart where a college and its programs are heading (Mercer, 1997). By selecting which goals to pursue, deans have the potential to exert a tremendous influence on the direction of the units (Twombly, 1992).

Furthermore, Gmlech & Wolverton (2000) mentioned that over the past thirty to forty years, universities have grown in size and complexity. Deanship has become decidedly more managerial in nature. Presidents had begun shifting external duties such as alumni relations and fund raising in part to deans. Academic deans, although still charged with the academic leadership of their colleges, were also expected to be fiscal experts, fund raisers, politicians, and diplomats. The teaching imperative addresses the liaison role between the central administration and the faculty. This includes building relationships and effectively communicating the needs of faculty, staff and students to garner support for new academic initiatives. Deans promote a work environment conducive to scholarship. Representing the college reflects the need to communicate to senior administration what is occurring within the college, using both quantitative and qualitative data to tell the story (Castenell and Tarule, 1997). The financial aspect of the position has expanded beyond overseeing budgets. It includes securing new funds, particularly from alumni and “friends” of the institution (Mercer, 1997; Miller,

1989). In connection to this, Zimpher (1995) noted that some deans spend as much as 50 percent of their time on external fundraising activities.

In general, the major roles that deans are expected to play as leaders can be categorized into seven major dimensions. These dimensions include: Vision and Goal Setting, Management of the Units, Interpersonal Relationships, Communication skills, Research/Professional endeavors, Quality of Education in the Units, and Support for Institutional Diversity. These are also considered as leadership dimensions that serve to evaluate deans' leadership effectiveness (Heck, Johnsrad and Rosser, 2000).

In spite of the fact that deans are expected to play various leadership roles, it should be noted that the success of their deanship can be influenced by various factors related both to themselves and their institutions. A diversified body of literature emphasized that deanship effectiveness in HEIs can be hampered by such factors as: role conflict and ambiguity, stress, lack of sufficient preparation, scarcity of resources, incongruence of university systems and rapid expansion of the study programs (Wolverton et al., 2001).

In sum, deans' leadership is among the major determinants of the effectiveness of HEIs' performances. If HEIs are to develop their capacity to change and to be relevant, strengthening of their leadership capacity is very much needed (Balton and Genck, 1971). And such actions should be based on the results of sound scientific knowledge. It is therefore, important to study deanship effectiveness and the associated factors that hamper its success.

Statement of the Problem

While deans' leadership is among the important factors for institutional success, there is little empirical research that measures their effectiveness as leaders. In this regard, Aitkin (1994) stated that the academic deanship/leadership is the least studied and most misunderstood position in higher education. Although quite a number of scholars have written about

the organization and governance of higher education, few have examined those who lead faculties/colleges in these institutions and their effectiveness. Even these few studies remain limited in scope and currency (Anderson & King, 1987; Tucker & Bryan, 1988). Moreover, to the best of this researchers' knowledge, studies carried out so far to scrutinize deanship effectiveness in Ethiopian HEIs in general and Jimma University in particular are scarce. Furthermore, in its five years strategic plan, Jimma University has pointed out *Poor Leadership and Management* as one of the university's challenges and emphasized the importance of having visionary and committed leadership at institutional and program levels (JU, 2007). And this implies that there is a need for an empirical study that examines the existing leadership status together with the associated factors that affect deans' leadership effectiveness in the university. Hence, this study attempted to assess the extent to which college deans in Jimma University are effective in their leadership by focusing on the following research questions:

- a) To what extent are the deans effective in setting vision and goals of their respective colleges?
- b) How successful are the deans in encouraging research/professional endeavors in their respective colleges?
- c) How effective are the deans in promoting the quality of education in their respective colleges?
- d) What major factors hamper deans' leadership effectiveness in Jimma University?

Scope of the Study

This study is delimited to measuring deans' leadership effectiveness in Jimma University from three major dimensions Setting Vision and Goals, Encouraging Research/Professional Endeavors, and Promoting Quality of Education in their respective colleges. These are among the leadership roles entrusted to deans in Jimma University as indicated in the Senate Legislation and Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) documents. Moreover, the study is confined to investigating the major factors that affect deans' leadership effectiveness in the University.

Limitations of the study

First of all, there is a dearth of empirical studies carried out on deanship effectiveness in Jimma University in particular and Ethiopian universities in general. Hence, it was not possible to corroborate the findings of this study with previous studies conducted in Ethiopia. Secondly, since there is no standardized instrument developed to measure deanship effectiveness in Ethiopian universities, this study has adopted the questionnaire developed for similar purposes in other countries.

Operational Definition of Terms

Effectiveness: the extent to which deans in Jimma University are successful in discharging their leadership roles as measured by the three major leadership dimensions, i.e. setting vision and goals, encouraging staff to be involved in research undertaking, and promoting quality of education in the University.

Leadership: the art deans employ to influence their subordinates (department heads, instructors, other staff members and students) so that they will strive for the accomplishment of institutional goals.

Role based approach: an approach used to assess deanship effectiveness based on their leadership role.

Literature Review

This section does not intend to discuss the definitions, theories and styles of leadership; it rather focuses on the importance of leadership in higher education institutions (HEIs) and the roles and responsibilities expected of deans as these are very much related with the research questions.

The Importance of Leadership in HEIs

Leadership is an important aspect of organizational performance. This is due to the fact that the degree of accomplishment of organizational goals, by and large, lies on the degree of the effectiveness of its leadership. Regarding this Langton et al (2002) stated that effective leadership results in higher performance whereas ineffective leadership results in cripple organization. When the leaders are effective, the subordinates are motivated and do their level best for the achievement of organizational objectives. Effective leadership is vital as it involves socially influencing (inspiring) workers to strive for the achievement of organizational objectives. (Globe, (1972) and Wu & Shiu, 2009) stated that strong leadership is seen as a main ingredient for the success of organizations. It directs the effective use of human capital towards achieving organization's mission and goals

Coming to educational organization, it is also argued that strong leadership has a positive influence on the performance of the institutions. Hallinger and Heck, in Silins and Hurray (1998), for instance, argued that the best practice of leadership is to influence educational institutions' performance. It does this through putting influences on employees. It ultimately influences employees' perception of students' attitude, learning and the country environment. Outstanding leadership has invariably emerged as a key characteristic feature of an organization. There can no longer be doubt that those seeking quality in education must ensure the presence of effective leadership and that the development of potential leaders must be given high priority.

Similarly, Hallinger and Heck in Silins and Hurray (1998) argued that educational leadership has a substantial effect on any educational organization. It is the heart and soul of educational institutions cruciality as well as the achievement of organizational objectives. Even though there is a dearth of knowledge on the relationship between leadership and quality of education in HEIs (as few studies were carried out in the area), it is possible to present sufficient evidence on the relationship between leadership and students achievement.

In the context of schools for instance, there is plenty of evidence in the literature that supports the argument that effective leadership can positively affect school performance in terms of students' academic achievement. Research on school effectiveness, for example, identified strong leadership as one of the important factors that contribute to improved students' academic achievement. Krist, Haertel and Williams in Darling-Hamond *et al.* (2007), found that the level of students academic achievement was better in schools where principals undertake and lead a school reform process: where they act as a manager of schools improvement, and cultivate schools' vision and make use of students' data to support class room practices and provide support for weak students.

The Department for Education and Science (DES) in the UK, in its study of ten good schools noted that effective leadership and conducive school climate are the two characteristics that are commonly shared among the schools. The study further stated that the quality of school leadership is the most important single factor in the success of these schools (Hopkins, Ainscow and West, 1994). Other studies also showed the need to focus on school leadership as a result of the influence it has on the academic achievement of students (See Scheerens, 1992; Scheerens and Bosker, 1997 and Scheerens, Glas and Thomas, 2007).

Goldring and Pasternak (1994) also argued that principals' role in framing school goals, establishing a clear mission, and gaining staff consensus were stronger predictor of school outcomes. Kendrick in Chun (2007) also concluded that principals' leadership was related to certain attributes of effective schools, namely increased students' achievement, decline in students' drop out rate and improved school climate. Generally, the majority of the school reform literature argues that school leadership is positively associated with students' learning and other works of schools (Leithwood and Riehl, 2005; Hellinger and Heck, 2000). The implication of this is the importance of giving attention to enhanced quality of educational leadership as it positively correlates with the overall performance of schools.

There is also a diversified body of literature that justifies the importance of strong leadership in HEIs. Wolverton and Sarros (1999), for instance, argued

that in the anatomy of HEIs, deans' leadership is a determinant factor for the success of institutions as deans provide the delicate but crucial back bone of university decision making. According to Astin and Astin(2000) the significance of leadership in any organization, and particularly in HEIs, encompasses the following values:

- creating supportive environment where people can grow, thrive and line up in peace;
- promoting harmony with nature and thereby providing in sustainability for future generations; and
- creating communities of reciprocal care and sharing responsibility where every person matters and each person's welfare and dignity is respected and supported.

It is also argued that leadership is fundamental to the success of all organizations including institutions of higher learning (Snodgrass and Schachar, 2008). HEIs are operating in an increasingly dynamic and complex environment requiring effective leadership to achieve targeted organizational goals. According to Brown (2001), deans of various colleges in a university are recognized as key leaders and most of the decisions are made at this level. Therefore, success of the colleges to a great extent depends on the leadership of college deans. Bogler (2001) also argued that effective leadership plays a vital role in leading universities through change. Strong leadership, complemented by effective administration of resources is, therefore, necessary to support change.

In addition, leadership in HEIs is essential as educational leaders are very important for the success of their institutions due to the following reasons. First, they are responsible for the effectiveness of the organization; that is the full success of the organization rests on perceived quality leaders. Second, change and up **heaval** make it essential for educational institutions to have an anchor and a guiding purpose. Third, educational leaders have a key role in alleviating public concerns about educational institutions. And fourth, they are the first and the key persons in organization that make the

organization climate healthy and attractive for employees (Hoy and Miskel, 1991).

HEIs need to provide a high quality and affordable education to students, it is imperative for academic administrators to be well prepared and give the right direction as HEIs hardly achieve their goals without effective leadership (Greicar, 2009). Jones and Rudd (2007) in the same way contended the importance of leadership in HEIs by stating that the leadership of colleges will be a determining factor of whether the college will be able to successfully and effectively manage the change. College deans as leaders are designated as the individuals responsible for guiding their organization during change.

HEIs continually work in a sea of change. Good leadership, therefore, fosters change that is both transformative and sustainable. It can be concerned with moral or organizational matters. It can define the colleges' role in the world beyond its walls, or it can determine their internal dynamics. Most importantly it requires a worthy goal-vision (Ekman, 2003). Effective leadership is central to change and in particular, to produce constructive or adaptive changes. Good leadership requires the development of a vision, communication of that vision and the ability to set purpose or direction (Bedeian and Hunt, 2005). In a nut shell, effective leadership is a cornerstone for the success of educational institutions

The Roles and Responsibilities of Deans as Leaders

The roles that deans are expected to play vary from country to country, time to time and institution to institution. In this regard, different authors describe different roles that deans are expected to play. According to Fish (2004) and Gmlech and Wolverton (2003), the role of academic dean has become more complex and demanding. Prior to the 1990s, the deans' role was to provide guidance and support for students and faculty. However, presently, deans are responsible for all aspects of academic affairs in addition to budgeting, recruiting, curriculum development and faculty development and retention.

It is also contended that dealing with the demands of the faculty without compromising the mission of the faculty is another role played by deans. Deans, as leaders of college, need to systematically identify major factors impeding the success of colleges, and to take timely actions so as to solve the problems. Academic deans also have the responsibility of external fund raising and alumni relations (Montez and Gmelch,, 2000). Specially, in developing countries where HEIs are expected to transform the society with meager resources provided from the government, deans are expected to devise mechanisms through which they can secure additional fund which helps them to realize their mission.

In addition, success of HEIs can also be affected by the relationship that exists among members. Where there is a healthy relationship among staff there is a better organizational performance and vice versa. In addition, due to their middle level placement in higher education structure, deans are in the centre of controversy, conflict and debate. This implies that, as leaders, deans have to play the role of coalition builder, negotiator and facilitator (Rosser, Jhonsrud and Heck, 2003). Gmelch et al. (2002) also state that as academic leaders, deans are expected to play the roles of persuader, negotiator or arbitrator, convincing faculty to endorse central administration policy. Deans as leaders, therefore, should provide resources and work to create healthy relationship among staff so as to maximize the performance of their organization.

Furthermore, as leaders of colleges, academic deans are expected to play roles that are crucial for the achievement of organizational goals. As academic leaders, they have the authority to chart where a college and its programs are headed (Mercer, 1997). By selecting which goals to pursue, deans have the potential to exert a tremendous influence on the direction of the units (Twombly, 1992).

Bowker (1981) also summarizes dean's leadership roles as administration, committee service, student personnel work, curriculum functions and supervision of faculty. Deans are responsible for planning, coordination and controlling of organizations works. They also need to deal with various

affairs related to students. Above all, they need to oversee the performance of various departments under the college. Gmelch et al. (2002) argued that deans, as middle line managers in HEIs, have the following major roles.

- External/political relation: this includes such roles as fund raising, financial planning, promoting diversity, ensuring alumni support and representing the college and its administration.
- Resource management: this includes roles such as proper record keeping, resource and non academic staff management, keeping pace with technological change and compliance with state rules and regulations.
- Internal productivity: this means teaching, meeting the goals of college, realizing the mission of the university, maintaining healthy working environment, and encouraging staff professional development.
- Academic personnel management: such as recruiting, evaluating unit chairs and staffs.
- Personal scholarship: this includes maintaining personal academic agenda, keeping current in own discipline and demonstrating scholarship (Gmelch et al. 2002).

Gmelch & Wolverton (2000) also state that over the past thirty to forty years, as universities grew in size and complexity, the deanship has become decidedly more managerial in nature. Presidents had begun shifting external duties such as alumni relations and fund raising in part to deans. Academic deans, although they are still charged with the intellectual leadership of their colleges, are also expected to be fiscal experts, fund raisers, politicians, and diplomats.

The same authors also contend that deans today are responsible for fostering good teaching, representing their colleges, engaging in financial planning and budgeting, building and maintaining good work environments within their colleges, providing direction, and recruiting strong faculty (Gmelch, Wolverton, and Sarros, 1999). The teaching imperative addresses the liaison role between central administration and the faculty. It includes building relationships and effectively communicating the needs of faculty,

staff and students to garner support for new academic initiatives. Representing the college reflects the need to communicate to senior administration what is occurring within the college, using both quantitative and qualitative data to tell the story (Castenell and Tarule, 1997). The financial aspects of the position have expanded beyond overseeing budgets to include securing new funds, particularly from alumni and “friends” of the institution (Mercer, 1997; P. M. Miller, 1989). Zimpher (1995) notes that some deans spend as much as 50 percent of their time on external fundraising activities. Providing direction refers to setting long-range college goals, communicating the college’s mission to employees and constituents, and being responsible for the general oversight of the college (Gmelch, Wolverton, Wolverton, and Sarros, 1999). Finally, recruiting, hiring, and developing the best faculty and chairs improves the academic environment and advance, the college’s reputation (W. E. Gardner, 1992). In general, deans as academic leaders are expected to play series of administrative and academic roles that are crucial for the success of their organization.

Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches, with more emphasis on descriptive survey method, were employed so as to benefit from the strong sides of both approaches. This method is presumed to sufficiently describe the current deanship effectiveness and factors that hamper this effectiveness in the University.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Currently, the university has three top officials (the President and Vice Presidents). One of these was purposively selected and included as a participant of the study. As regards College Deans, all deans except the Dean of College of Business and Economics, were purposively selected and included in the study. College of Business and Economics was used for pilot testing of the instruments. Besides, a total of 39 Heads of the departments in these colleges were purposively selected and included in the study due to their close working relationship and sufficient experience and insight to judge

deanship effectiveness in the university. As far as instructors are concerned, a sample of 192 (20%) were taken from the population of 960 using proportionate stratified sampling technique (see Table 1 for details). As Gray (1987) noted, for a population of 101-1000 a sample of 10% is sufficient for generalization of the finding.

Table 1: Sample Instructors Taken from Each College

No	Colleges	N	n
1	College of Natural Science	123	25
2	College of Social Science and Law	231	47
3	College of Technology and Engineering	178	36
4	College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine	158	32
5	College of Medical Science and Public Health	255	52
Total		960	192

Instruments and variables

Two basic types of instruments were employed to collect data for this study. These are questionnaire and interview. Questionnaires were employed to collect data from instructors and department heads to assess deanship effectiveness (the dependent variable) in Jimma University. The questionnaires were adapted from standardized questionnaire prepared by Heck, Johnsrud, and Rosser (2000), with the consultation of diversified body of literature on perspectives of deanship effectiveness (Greciar, 2009). They were modified to meet the context in which the research was carried out. Three major deans leadership dimensions (the independent variables), i.e. vision and goal setting, encouraging staff to be involved in research undertaking, and promoting quality of education leadership dimensions were selected because they are believed to be very strategic in materializing the missions of the University were assessed using this instrument. The questionnaire had five options where 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly

agree). The reliability of the questionnaire was maintained in such a way that it was pilot tested on one college before it was employed for the purpose of actual data collection. Accordingly, the coefficients of reliability of items for measuring deans' effectiveness in the three dimensions were 0.9, 0.9 and 0.8 respectively. The coefficients fall in the acceptable range ($\alpha = 0.8$).

In addition to the questionnaire, semi-structured interview was used to garner the views of the Vice President and College Deans on issues like deanship effectiveness, major challenges and remedies that the university should take to maximize deanship effectiveness.

Data Analysis

Both the quantitative as well as the qualitative data were analyzed concurrently. Such kind of analysis is employed when equal weight is given to both types of data. Both data type are used for the purpose of validation and the researchers wanted to substantiate the conclusions with more empirical findings. The quantitative data were analyzed through the application of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean, standard deviation, and analysis of variance were computed to investigate the effectiveness of deanship across the three dimensions and sample colleges in the University. Accordingly, the finding was analyzed in such a way that ($X < 3$ is *ineffective*, $X = 3$ is *moderately effective* and $X \geq 4$ is *highly effective*). The qualitative data were analyzed after the researchers repeatedly read the interview scripts to find words and phrases that appeared frequently. Then, the data were categorized in to themes using the phrases and words. Finally they were analyzed in sufficient detail.

Results

Deans' Effectiveness in Setting Vision and Goal of their Colleges

When we look at instructors' view of their college deans' effectiveness we understand that some view their deans' effectiveness positively. For example instructors of college one and five acknowledge their deans'

effectiveness in setting their college visions and goals. ($X=3.48$, $SD=0.93$ and $X=3.20$ and $SD=1.06$). However, this does not mean that their effectiveness is up to the described level ($X \leq 4$ the three colleges).

As shown in able 2 below, Instructors of college two, three and for seem to think that their deans' effectiveness in setting college visions and goals is below average ($x=2.73$, $SD = 1.01$, $x=2.70$, $SD = 0.94$ and $x = 2.97$, $SD = 0.80$).

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Instructors' and Department Heads' Response to Questions on Deans' Effectiveness in Setting Vision and Goal of their Colleges

Sources of data		College 1	College 2	College 3	College 4	College 5
Instructors	X	3.48	2.73	2.70	2.97	3.20
	SD	0.93	1.01	0.94	0.80	1.06
Department Heads	X	3.60	3.76	2.83	3.46	3.61
	SD	0.72	0.99	0.91	0.89	1.00

This result in short reveals that the effectiveness of deans in setting their colleges' vision and goals is below the expectation of instructors. Table 2 also shows that except college three($X=2.83$, $SD=0.91$), in the other four colleges, department heads have the view that their deans' effectiveness in setting vision and goals is moderate ($X < 4$ for the four colleges). Even though there seems to be a difference in the mean score of instructors' and department heads' responses the results generally indicate that deans are moderately effective in setting their colleges' vision and goals.

During the interview session, most of the college deans reflected that they had the opportunity to set their colleges' vision and goals when the colleges were re-structured in 2009 G.C. based on the Business Process Re-engineering (BPR). They also reported that colleges do not have their own mission and goals. The mission and goal of the university and that of colleges are somehow similar. But at college level, they make some

modifications to align with their own discipline. Furthermore, even though colleges are doing what they can, the process of vision and goals setting is not up to the desired level as they do not have sufficient time to follow all the procedures and involve all the concerned stake holders.

The responses of the sample top official of the University also do not deviate from the responses obtained from college deans. According to the official considered in this study, the visions and missions were set by the Ministry of Education and sent to universities. Accordingly, the university distributed them to the colleges with the belief that colleges adapt them to fit their specific disciplines. In this regard, the top official believes that deans do well though there are differences among them. Some deans are relatively more effective than others. This, in the official's perception, can be related to differences in their commitment, experiences and competences. In general deans' effectiveness in setting their colleges' vision and goals is moderate and their roles are limited.

Table 3: ANOVA for Deans' Effectiveness in Setting Vision and Goals of their Colleges

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Between groups	11,138	4	2.78	3.147	0.016
Within groups	42,938	150	.88		
Total	143,877	154			

Table 3 depicts that there is a statistically significant difference ($F=3.147$, $P<0.05$) among instructors in various colleges in the university regarding their views about the effectiveness of their respective deans in setting vision and goals of their colleges.

Deans' Effectiveness in Encouraging Research/Professional Endeavors in their Colleges

As can be seen in Table 4, except college one ($X=3.42$, $SD=1.02$), instructors in the majority of the colleges in the university negatively viewed

their deans' effectiveness in encouraging research undertaking and professional development. Out of the five colleges, instructors' rating of their deans' effectiveness in this dimension of leadership effectiveness is below average in the four colleges ($X < 3$ for the four colleges).

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Instructors' and Department Heads' Rating of Deans' Effectiveness in their Endeavour to Encourage Research Undertakings

Sources of data		College 1	College 2	College 3	College 4	College 5	Grand Mean
Instructors	X	3.42	2.69	2.54	2.78	2.94	2.84
	SD	1.02	1.21	0.81	0.98	0.87	1.02
Department Heads	X	3.60	3.94	2.90	3.08	3.08	3.35
	SD	0.89	0.83	1.21	0.80	0.92	0.95

It can also be observed from the Table 4 that, except department heads in college three other department heads in college one, two, four and five seem to have the view that the effectiveness of their deans in encouraging research undertaking is above average ($X > 3$ but < 4 for the four colleges). *Department heads in college Three viewed their deans' effectiveness in research undertaking negatively ($x = 2.90$, $SD = 1.21$).*

When the overall mean scores obtained from both the instructors and department heads are compared, it seems that department heads in the majority of the colleges positively view deans' effort in encouraging research undertaking whereas instructors in the majority of the colleges view it negatively. However, both the instructors and the department heads in these colleges seem to view that their deans' leadership in this dimension is not highly effective ($X < 4$).

In the interview conducted with the deans, they stated that research undertaking is one of the missions of the university and colleges. According to the deans, basically, staff members are expected to be involved in two major areas: teaching and research. So, research is one of the duties of Academic Staff. The deans moreover, stated that they encourage staff to

carry out research using various mechanisms. One dean for instance stated that “I encourage staff to carry out research by trying to facilitate an easy pass through the long and tedious bureaucratic procedures for proposal review and fund approval. I also encourage staff to take part in trainings related to research skill”.

The response of one of the deans also revealed that research undertaking is one of the duties of Academic Staff. According to him,

Previously, teachers were complaining that they could not carry out researches as they were overloaded. But, currently as a result of the shift of focus of training to science and engineering, teachers are not overloaded and this is a good opportunity for social science teachers to undertake research and it is also a means to sustain the existence of the college as well.

In every occasion, including staff meeting, therefore, the dean remind the staff to be engaged in research activities.

Another dean in the same way stated that “The university as well as colleges incorporated research undertaking as one of the criterion for academic promotion. For instance, Research undertaking is one major criterion for promotion to professorship”. This, according to the deans, is believed to encourage staff to be engaged in research undertaking. However it should be noted that this might not be sufficient enough to attract the attention and effort of the teaching staff.

As far as staff professional development is concerned, the deans stated that staff members are encouraged to take part in various short and long term trainings. For instance, there are various trainings arranged by Academic Development and Resource Centre (ADRC) to enhance teachers’ instructional skills. Whenever such trainings are arranged, they encourage Academic Staff to participate.

Concerning long term trainings (MSc and PhD), the deans stated that the university has its own rules and regulations through which staffs are provided with the opportunity for further study. Besides, every department

has its own training plan. Every staff member has, therefore, the prospect for further study based on the plan and regulations. The role of the dean is, therefore, to ensure that staff are provided with such opportunity based on the plan. They further stated that their effort in such kind of training is limited to facilitation as it is executed according to the rule and plan. However, it seems that sometimes they are flexible with regard to the issue in focus. One dean for instance stated that "As per the University's regulation, two years service is a pre-requisite for Masters Degree training. However, when there is a shortage of teachers in some area of specialization, we allow them to go for further study after one year service assuming that this would solve immediate problem pertinent to qualified staff".

Another interviewed dean also stated that even though his role is limited, he would try at least not to be an obstacle to those Academic Staff who want to upgrade themselves. However, the deans still did not deny that their mandate is limited in this regard as this kind of training is executed based on the university's rules and regulations and the departments' plan for staff training.

In this connection, the top official stated that "... there are indications on how far deans are effective in this regard". He also noted that "...the number of researches carried out in the colleges can be taken as evidence". According to him, "...relatively large numbers of researches are being carried out in the colleges of Public Health and Medical Science and Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine". Moreover, he noted that "...the variation may not only be attributed to deans' effort. These two colleges are relatively older and they have more senior staff and better external linkage". He further stated that:

Various efforts are being carried out in the area of staff professional development. For example, various trainings are arranged to improve staff's instructional skills (students' assessment, teaching methodology and material preparation). Furthermore, large numbers of academic staff are attending their Post Graduate Studies (MSc. and PhD). The role of deans in this respect is to facilitate the training.

Table 5: ANOVA for Deans' Effectiveness in Encouraging Research Undertakings and Professional Development

Source	SS	df	MS	F	P
Between groups	11.13	4	2.78	2.750	.030
Within groups	151.75	150	1.01		
Total	162.87	154			

Table 5 shows that statistically there is a significant difference ($F=2.750$, $P<0.05$) among instructors of various colleges in their rating their deans effectiveness in promoting research undertaking and professional development. This means that considerable variations are observed among instructors in various colleges in their rating of their deans' effort in encouraging research activities and staff professional development.

Deans' Effectiveness in promoting the Quality of Education in their Colleges

As depicted in Table 6, instructors in some of the colleges seem to view their deans' effectiveness in promoting the quality of education positively whereas others appear to view it negatively. Instructors rating of their deans' effectiveness in promoting the quality of education is above average in college one and four ($X=3.47$, $SD=1.01$ and $X=3.27$, $SD=1.00$ respectively) .whereas instructors rating of their deans' effectiveness in promoting the quality of education in college two, three and five is less than average ($X=2.84$, $SD=0.93$; $X=2.78$, $SD=0.94$ and $X=2.87$, $SD=0.80$ respectively).

Table 6: Mean and Standard Deviation of Instructors' and Department Heads' Response to questions on Deans' Effectiveness in Promoting the Quality of Education

Sources of data		College 1	College 2	College 3	College 4	College 5
Instructors	<i>X</i>	3.47	2.84	2.78	3.27	2.87
	<i>SD</i>	1.01	0.93	0.94	1.00	0.80
Department Heads	<i>X</i>	4.19	4.03	2.55	3.26	3.83
	<i>SD</i>	0.52	0.89	0.47	0.70	0.42

The table also shows that except college three ($X=2.55$, $SD=0.47$), department heads' rating of their deans' effectiveness in promoting the quality of education in the four different colleges is only above average. This result further discloses that both the instructors and department heads have the belief that deans are moderately effective in their effort in promoting quality of education.

Interview responses obtained from college deans revealed that though it may not be sufficient, they work to ensure the quality of education and training offered in their respective colleges. They indicated that the issue of quality of education nowadays is a burning issue. They argued that quality of education has been very much compromised due to various reasons which in most cases cannot be resolved at college level. However, it seems that they are trying to promote the quality of education in their respective colleges. One of the deans, for instance, pointed out that "It would be difficult to talk about quality of education without quality teachers. Thus, as college leader I am trying to encourage staff to take part in trainings that improve their pedagogical skill, as this skill is one of the determinant factors of quality of education".

The other dean similarly indicated that he is trying to implement various mechanisms to promote the quality of education. He, for instance reported that "I try to ensure that qualified instructors are hired by reminding the committee to take due care during staff recruitment". He further mentioned that "...there is also a nationally harmonized curriculum though how well the

curriculum is being implemented is not well emphasized. Furthermore, there are various course teams in each department responsible for the proper implementation of each course”.

The dean further mentioned that he is facilitating conditions to implement continuous assessment in evaluating students. He also mentioned that efforts are being made to encourage staff to execute student centered teaching methods. However, the deans did not deny the fact that what they are doing is not sufficient to ensure the quality of education and training offered by their respective colleges.

The top official stated that “...all activities being carried out in areas of staff professional development and research are supplementary to the quality of education offered by the colleges”. He also noted that “...training being given for Academic staff on students’ assessment, teaching methodology, module writing, and research skill are all inputs for enhancing the quality of education”. To his knowledge, the deans as college leaders are communicating these to the departments and also following up the implementation. However, he is skeptical about the extent to which deans are successful in this regard.

Table 7: ANOVA for Deans’ Effectiveness in Promoting the Quality of Education

Source	SS	df	MS	F	P
Between groups	10.43	4	2.60	2.89	.024
Within groups	135.25	150	.90		
Total	145.69	154			

Table 7 illustrates that statistically there is a significant difference ($F=2.89$, $P< 0.05$) among instructors in various colleges in their rating of deans’ effort to promote the quality of education.

In sum, the results reported so far indicate that the effectiveness of deans in vision and goal setting, in influencing the staff to participate in research undertaking and in promoting quality of education is moderate. Moreover,

there is a significant difference among the views of faculty members about the leadership effectiveness of their respective college deans.

Major Factors Affecting Deans' Leadership Effectiveness

The result of the interview data obtained from college deans shows that there are various factors hampering deans' leadership effectiveness at various colleges of the University. Generally, the major obstacles are categorized into the following major themes:

Theme 1: Limited College Autonomy. Most of the college deans responded that colleges are not fully autonomous to make use of resources and make decisions on issues that have strategic relevance for the realization of colleges' mission and goals. One of the college dean for instance responded that "...it has been said that BPR is being implemented in the university and positive results being scored. In fact according to the PBR power seems to be decentralized Colleges but that is not fully working out on the ground. The executive body retained much power and made Colleges wait for their willingness on matters related to procurement".

Similarly, the other dean also remarked that "...the colleges even do not have the power to make decisions on issues that are crucial for effective leadership including resources utilization". This is severely manifested in making use of the existing meager budget. He, for instance, stated that, "...the necessary equipment is not purchased on time as the deans do not have the power to issue orders to procurement office of the university". This consequently leads to inefficient use of resources and lags in implementation of plans to realize the colleges' goals and vision.

The top official also indicated that "...colleges' autonomy on resource utilization including financial matters is very limited and this would negatively influence the amount and quality of work performed by the colleges". According to him, decentralizing financial matters is something tied with the regulations developed by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. The university is, therefore, discussing with these Ministries to formulate policies that allow deans to decide on

financial matters; however, the official pointed out that "...colleges have great autonomy in academic issues".

Theme 2: Staff Turnover: All college deans stated that there is a high staff turnover across the colleges in the university due to various reasons. This is particularly serious in the Colleges of Public Health and Medical Sciences and Engineering and Technology. One of the college deans, for instance, reported that "...the general working environment and payment scheme in the University is not satisfactory. Most of the teaching staff do not have interest to stay in the university for a long time as they have access to better working environment and attractive salary".

The top official also confirmed the existence of high staff turnover in the university. He further stated that "... this problem is severe in Public Health and Medical Science and Technology and Engineering College as the demand for professionals in these Colleges is very high in the labor market". Moreover, he pointed out that the uncompetitive salary and unattractive incentives scheme employed by the university is a major cause of this problem. Apart from this, he remarked that "...incentive is not specific problem of the university; it is a national problem and the university has no power to decide on major payments including salary". Of course, the University is offering incentives to those academic staff who are working as officers in addition to their regular duty of teaching and research. In addition, there is an incentive for academic staff teaching more than 12 Credit hours per week. As noted by the official, whether the incentive is sufficient or not can be an issue of discussion.

Theme 3: Being Occupied by Routine work: Most college deans responded that they spend most of their time dealing with such things as staff and students' affairs, responding to letters and participating in long meetings. This, according to the college deans, negatively affects the quality and the amount of work done by their colleges.

Theme 4: Inapt Structure: According to the deans' responses, the structure, especially of the academic wing, is one of the bottlenecks for their leadership. One dean, for instance, stated that he is a dean of a college that

has 19 departments. There is also a college that has only four departments. The duties, responsibilities and incentives of these deans are the same while the volume of work they are expected to handle differs significantly. This, according to him, is “unfair and even difficult to compare and evaluate colleges’ performance”.

Theme 5: Lack of Sufficient Experience and Training: All college deans have education and training background that is not relevant to the duties and responsibilities of academic leadership. Even though they have taken short-term training related to higher education leadership, the training is found to be insufficient. It also lacks continuity and sustainability. The interview data obtained from with the college deans also revealed that most deans have served as deans for less than two years. Most deans have obtained their position when BPR was initially exercised in the university, i.e. July 2001 E.C. Moreover, two of the college deans did not have any experience in any leadership positions (department headship, for example) before they acquired their current position.

Moreover, the top official noted that “...most deans did not have adequate preparation when they came to this position as there is high senior staff turnover in some of the colleges”. In order to address this problem, the university is offering leadership trainings to managers at different levels in the university in collaboration with the Netherlands Government (Nuffic) though the training is limited in its coverage. Generally speaking, the results of this study disclosed that the deans’ leadership effectiveness in the University is being hampered by such factors as lack of sufficient training and experience, limited power and autonomy, shortage of resources and high staff turnover.

Discussion

Vision and goals are sources of inspiration for employees. Instructors and college deans make series of decisions daily, often without the data needed to make informed choices. Leaders with clearly articulated goals are often more effective problem solvers. When tackling messy problems often faced

in the colleges, the leaders' vision becomes substitute for information (Hallinger and Heck, 2000). Clearly articulated vision shapes action, invests our work with meaning and reminds us why we are educators. When vision is shared with employees, it becomes a catalyst of transformation (Hallinger and Heck, 2000). Deans as leaders therefore, are expected to set and communicate the vision and goals of their colleges so that they can inspire employees with the ultimate aim of bringing about better organizational performance. However, the results of this study uncovered that the deans' effectiveness in setting their Colleges' vision and goals is moderate.

Research is one of the core missions of universities. According to the 2009 Ethiopian Higher Education Proclamation (No.650), one of the major objectives of HEIs is to promote and enhance research focusing on knowledge and technology transfer consistent with the country's priority needs (FDRE, 2009, p. 4979). To this end, the document clearly stated that HEIs have the responsibility to encourage relevant study, research and community services in national and local priority areas and disseminate the findings as may be appropriate. Furthermore, with the presumption that research leads to quality education and is a springboard for informed policy, the university identified research undertaking as one of the major strategic issues in its transformational agenda (JU, 2007). This kind of undertaking is not an easy task and needs considerable commitment of leaders at different levels in the Organization's hierarchy. This implies that deans, as leaders, are also expected to encourage research undertaking in their respective colleges. The 2009 BPR document of the University states that deans are responsible for monitoring their college for academic, research and extension and for other administrative activities (JU, 2009). Deans are expected to encourage staff to carry out research. The result of this study, however, revealed that though deans are attempting to do various activities to encourage research undertakings, it seems that their effort is not up to the expected level.

Another mission of HEIs is to train qualified and competent professionals who are capable of playing considerable role in the socio-economic advancement of the country. However, it is naïve to expect HEIs to play this

role without quality education and training. Many scholars agree that due to massive expansion of HEIs in Ethiopia, the quality of education and training has been very much compromised.

The Ethiopian Higher Education proclamation (No.650) states that quality training, education and service is one of the major guiding values of HEIs. The document further underlines that HEIs should develop internal quality assurance system. This is because as they are responsible for the quality of education and training they offer to their students (FDRE, 2009:4988). Jimma University also seems to give due attention to the quality of education it offers as ensuring the quality and relevance of teaching and learning at the university is stated as one strategic issues in its five year strategic plan (JU, 2007). However, ensuring the quality of education is not a simple task. It requires the involvement of all staff members among which deans are the major ones. In this regard, deans can play various roles. For instance, they are expected to recruit a high quality faculty. They ensure that faculty members maintain high academic standards in their classrooms (Rosser, Johnsrud, and Heck 2003). They ensure the availability and adequacy of educational support materials in their colleges. Besides, they should ensure the existence of supportive learning and teaching environment and the implementation of teaching and student assessment methods that are proved to be effective. By doing so, they can promote the quality of education and trainings offered in their colleges. However, the finding of this study disclosed that deans in the university are moderately effective in their effort to promote the quality of education offered by their colleges.

According to the 2009 BPR document of the University, deans are the chief executive officers of their colleges and are responsible for an array of activities that require decisions making. However, it would be illogical to expect deans to discharge these responsibilities in the way expected without autonomy and power. Langton et al. (2002) argue that power is a key to effective leadership. No matter how one is skilful in leadership, a key component is found in the power of the leader to affect other people's behaviour and get them to act in certain ways and decide on utilization of

resources for the achievement of organizational objectives. Deans are expected to make decisions on various academic and administrative issues which in turn require legitimate power. However, deans in Jimma University seem to try hard to carry out various responsibilities without commensurate power and autonomy. This would lead to poor organizational performance lack of power and autonomy as it hampers any activity carried out by the colleges. The implication is that if deans have to play their leadership role in an effective and efficient way, power to make decisions should be decentralized. They should also work without any unnecessary external interference.

As stated previously, the colleges in the University have various missions to realize. The realization of these missions requires qualified and competent academic staff. However, due to low staff attraction and retention capacity, the university has been suffering from shortage of qualified staff (JU, 2007). The working and living environment as well as the location of the University are not favorable to qualified and experienced staff. Retention of these staff has become difficult due to uncompetitive salary and benefit schemes. The dean alone cannot realize the missions of the college. This requires the concerted effort of well trained and experienced staff. Of course, some of the major causes of staff turnover might be beyond the level of deans. For instance, the issue of salary and other incentives in most cases are determined by the university senate.

In order to enhance the colleges' performance, deans should focus on the major missions of the University, i.e. teaching and learning, research and community service. Unless the deans free themselves from the routine chores of the office and reserve some free time for study and reflection on the purposes and the program of the academic body over which they preside, their decisions would inevitably be superficial, uninformed, and often inconsistent (Roaden, 1970). In short, spending much time on routine activities that have low strategic relevance for the materialization of the colleges' missions leads deans to be deficient in time they need to work on key functions of the institution. This ultimately influences the realization of institutional missions negatively.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this study revealed that the effectiveness of the deans in setting vision and goals of their respective colleges is not up to the desired level. Moreover, the deans are found to be modest in influencing their staff to be involved in research undertaking and promote quality of educational program provided to the students. If the university needs to materialize its vision and mission, it should assist deans to become more effective in teaching- learning research and community services.

Deans' leadership effectiveness in Jimma University is hampered by such factors as: lack of adequate preparation, limited power to decide on resources allocation and utilization, ineffective incentive scheme, high staff turnover and inapt structure. This implies that deans' leadership effectiveness is being hindered not only by factors related to the deans themselves but also institutional factors that are related to the colleges as well as the university at large.

Hence, the following points are proposed to address these problems and improve the leadership effectiveness of college deans in the University.

- The university's top level management should be committed to ensure that authority and responsibility are meaningfully decentralized and fairly distributed to all colleges.
- The appointment of deans needs to be based on level of education, prior training and experience. To this effect, the university should revise its criteria for the selection of college deans.
- The university ought to attract and retain qualified staff members. In this regard, it should broaden opportunities for staff members to supplement their income through, for instance, involvement in consultancy works, short-term training, continuing education, in-house professional assignments, and others.

- The organizational structure of the university should be revised in such a way that it facilitates the materialization of institutional missions and goals.
- It is useful that the university arrange various training opportunities related to higher education leadership in order to fill the gap observed in deans' training deficiency and improve their leadership capacity.
- The university should pave ways through which college deans share experiences on important leadership skills; and develop policies by which well performing deans are recognized and awarded.

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