

CHAPTER 1

Higher Education Institution Leadership Experience

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Institution Leadership is perceived differently by different leaders based on their experiences. Many had their own ways in dealing with situations and challenges. Some had led through research activities; some had led through teachings experiences and some through administration position processes. The challenges that these leaders had to face comes in many shapes and sizes. This chapter provides the insights of academic leader experiences in leading the department and people in Higher Education Institutions (HEI). Successful leaders must have the ability to analyse not only the skills and limitations of individuals but also those of their organization (Clayton, 2011). Clayton mentioned that established industry leaders almost always generate and introduce sustaining innovation. However, this same organization never introduce disruptive ideas or do well to manage them. A technique based on system thinking examines the roles and values present in the system and any threats to those roles and values. Even though both functions and departments and individuals may reflect

certain values and roles, a system thinking approach avoids personal problems in favour of focusing on the bigger picture. These two elements are discussed in this book chapter. This book chapter is divided into two parts. Part I presents the present situation and scenario faced by the Malaysia HEI leaders and the part II provides the re-envisioning of the higher education ecosystem in Malaysia.

1.2 THE MALAYSIA EXPERIENCE

Leadership is defined as an ability to influence a group toward the achievement of goals (Robbins, 2003). The best aspect of leadership is that it can be learn and develop. We must possess the passion and willpower necessary to succeed as leaders. In addition to having to manage subordinates when in an administrative job, leading an organisation is not a simple undertaking. Juggling routines, leading and making decisions comes in a package. This part presents the Malaysia HEI leaders' experiences who had led and transformed the landscape of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). Transformational changes present the challenges that a leader had to faced. Making popular and unpopular decisions to sustain the operational of academic programs and external collaborations. Then a practical peer-led leadership framework is proposed using the three facets of academic paths, which are teaching and learning, research and administrative. This peer-led leadership framework includes academic elements that overlap between leadership role and the academic routine.

1.2.1 Transformational Changes

This section provides a first-hand experience on a government initiative of premier programmes which implemented in UTM namely, Integrated Managers Development Scheme (IMDS), a post-graduate executive diploma (awarded by Warwick University), Integrated Graduate Development Scheme, a master's level programme in Engineering Business Management (awarded by Warwick University), Engineering Doctorate and a PhD level programme (this degree was awarded by UTM). As the competitors begin to offer similar executives programmes in the market, the demand has dropped, and the cash flow problem started to build up. This senior manager was given the task to overcome these challenges. The drastic measures that he had to make was not popular but need to be done to over the issue of the cash flow. Some initiatives were introduced to ensure monetary generation continues. Leading any unit in the HEI requires knowledge not just in the field of academic but also in other matters such as finance, marketing, safety health and many more that relate to the people and the premises in the HEI. In the case of Business Advanced Technology Centre (BATC), it has many stakeholders that need to be taken account of. Some stakeholders are permanent such as the board of directors and students. Another can be short-term, for instance, a collaboration programmes for 16 years with Warwick university.

The decision and proposal had been made, the senior manager needed the support from the top management where he had successfully managed to convince the top management to the transformational change for BATC and UTM. With the problem comes opportunity. BATC had opportunity to collaborate with Meiji University by offering a double master with the price of one. UTM also emulated Warwick University