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Designing a Constructive Leadership Implementation Model in the Higher Education System Using an Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) Approach



Abstract: - The present study designed a model for the implementation of constructive leadership in the higher education system using an interpretive structural modeling approach. This study was applied in terms of aim and qualitative type of descriptive in terms of method of implementation. The statistical population of the study included experts in educational and constructive leadership in higher education at Urmia University. Based on the principle of random sampling, 7 of them were selected as a sample using convenience and snowball sampling methods. A semi-structured interview with experts whose questions were designed based on the theoretical foundations of constructive leadership in higher education with the help of professors was used as the study tool. The validity of the results was examined and confirmed by the triangulation method. Also, its face validity was confirmed by the opinions of experts who were not members of the study, and its reliability was calculated at 0.83 using the inter-coder coefficient of the agreement method. The data obtained from semi-structured interviews were analyzed with open, axial, and selective coding based on grounded theory in MAXQDA software. The results showed that the model of constructive leadership in higher education based on grounded theory included 12 components and 9 dimensions. The category of causal conditions included two dimensions of the necessity of constructive management (with two components of knowledge management and organizational innovation) and organizational culture (with two components of collaborative management and innovative atmosphere). The category of contextual conditions included two dimensions of management maturity (with the component of evaluating and applying policies for constructive management) and the system of fostering change and transformation (with the component of establishing relationships with aligned people and organizations). The category of intervening conditions included the dimension of competition with the surrounding environment and increasing progress (with the component of planning and paying attention to facilities). The category of strategies included two dimensions having facilities and requirements (with the component of financing and equipment) and responsibility and cooperation (with the components of empathy and public desire). Finally, the category of implications included two dimensions of academic development (with 2 components of individual competence development and university development) and social development (with the component of gaining public trust).

Keywords: Constructive leadership, Higher education, Implementation, Educational leadership.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, organizations are facing many challenges in their administration and management owing to many changes and transformations. They need constructive leadership for better management and to achieve growth and development (Dyrbye et al., 2020). The onset of leadership dates back to the emergence of social life. Leadership is the act of affecting others so that people willingly strive to achieve group goals (Abson and Schofield, 2022). As one of the significant and key concepts in organizational and educational psychology, it is considered one of the primary processes in any university. The productivity of any university highly depends on the leadership styles of its administrators (Urbano, Felix, and Aparicio, 2021). Leadership at the top of higher education causes creativity presents new ideas and facilitates innovative and risk-taking behaviors (Zahed Babolan et al., 2018). In other words, higher education nowadays needs transformation and innovation to survive, avoid stagnation, and adapt to the unstable and changing environment (Mehrabi et al., 2021).

In constructive leadership, leaders have a divine gift and provide spiritual motivation and special attention to their followers and guide them by penetrating their hearts (Amer et al., 2022). Constructive leaders create a dynamic organizational landscape that often necessitates a shift in cultural values to reflect more innovation (Wang, 2022). Constructive leadership also seeks to establish a relationship between individual and collective interests to allow subordinates to work for higher goals (Mir Kamali et al., 2011). Constructive leaders can make their followers committed given their ability to change followers' goals and beliefs (Chu et al., 2022). They do not consider the current values and attitudes in the organization static but are in search of change and transformation in line with the goals and mission of the organization based on the environmental conditions (Austin et al., 2016).

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The current era of human life is associated with amazing developments and transformations (Gharibzadeh et al., 2016). Almost every organization faces some kind of change in its information systems (Gharibzadeh et al., 2019). Nowadays, the speed and diversity of communication flows of current information systems are not comparable with those of the past ten years (Crawford, 2015). Constructive leaders define the future scenario for the organization, improve employees by helping them to understand their ultimate talent, determine the organization's mission and vision for employees, and cooperate with employees to identify their needs (Peterson et al., 2009; Jafari et al., 2017). Leadership styles and especially constructive leadership are crucial in improving educational systems. However, limited studies have been conducted about it, especially in Iran. Accordingly, the results of the most significant studies are reported below.

Regarding constructive and innovative leadership, Contreras et al. (2021) introduced the four dimensions of promoting learning processes, review, adaptability, and orientation to people. Khorsandirad et al. (2023) reported that an authentic and constructive leadership model for managers includes causal factors including organizational policies, organizational appointments, individual characteristics and competencies, contextual factors including strategic approach and management level competition, intervening factors including weakness in goal setting, lack of facilities and increased conflict, strategies including reviewing the structure of schools, intellectual independence of managers and resilience, implications including improving the quality of education, increasing social capital, and reducing social harm.

Mousavi et al. (2020) conducted a study on the suitable model of self-leadership of educational managers. They concluded that the mentioned model included 8 indicators of self-knowledge, self-guidance, self-monitoring, self-control, effectiveness, goal-setting, self-motivation, and self-reflection. Momenian et al. (2019) introduced the primary factors shaping and establishing the creative leadership of managers in education. They included four categories of contextual conditions, causal conditions, practical strategies, and axial categories. Kiang et al. (2017) also concluded that the leader's creativity with two components of creativity of the role of employees and creativity of the role of the leader directly and significantly affected the creativity of the team and employees.

Concerning the necessity of the present study, it can be stated that educational organizations, especially the higher education system, are nowadays facing many challenges and one of the effective and appropriate ways to deal with these challenges is to have constructive and creative leaders. Such leaders can improve the quality of the education system. Another significant issue is that Urmia University, as an educational organization, plays an essential role in the development of the country's higher education and the promotion of Iran's global position in the field of science production and human resources training. This university can employ a part of the country's academic community and train specialized and committed human resources. The most significant changes and transformations in the new management are in the field of economization of knowledge-based activities and the greatest efforts to apply and increase the quality of the topics so they can use them to meet the needs of society.

Concerning the role and significance of constructive leadership in improving the quality of the educational system, the studies suggest that very limited studies have been conducted about constructive leadership in the country's higher education system, and many studies are needed to improve the quality of the higher education system. The constructive leadership models in higher education, including in Urmia University, can help the officials, experts, and planners of the educational system to improve the current situation of the educational system and provide the conditions for the growth and promotion of students. Thus, the present study designed a constructive leadership implementation model in the higher education system using an interpretive structural modeling approach and presented a constructive leadership model in higher education.

II. METHODS

This study was applied in terms of aim and qualitative type of descriptive in terms of method of implementation. The statistical population of the study included experts in educational and constructive leadership in higher education at Urmia University. Based on the principle of random sampling, 7 of them were selected as a sample using convenience and snowball sampling methods. A semi-structured interview with experts whose questions were designed based on the theoretical foundations of constructive leadership in higher education with the help of professors was used as the study tool. The validity of the results was examined and confirmed by the triangulation method. Also, the face validity was confirmed by the opinion of experts who were not members of the study, and their reliability was calculated at 0.83 by the inter-coder coefficient of agreement. The data obtained from semi-structured interviews were analyzed with open, axial, and selective coding based on grounded theory in MAXQDA software.

III. RESULTS

According to the results obtained from the data collection, most of the participants were male (4 people), 6 people were associate professors, and 1 person was a full professor. Table 1 reports the results of open, axial, and selective coding for the constructive leadership model in higher education based on the grounded theory.

Table (1): The results of open, axial, and selective coding for constructive leadership model in higher education based on grounded theory

Categories	dimensions or selective coding	Components or axial coding
Causal conditions	The necessity of constructive management	knowledge management
		Organizational Innovation
	Organizational Culture	Participatory Management
		Innovative atmosphere
Contextual conditions	Management maturity	Evaluating and applying policies for productive management
	The system of fostering change and transformation	Establishing relationships with similar people and organizations
Intervening conditions	Competition with the surrounding environment and increasing progress	Planning and paying attention to facilities
Strategies	Having facilities and necessities	Financing and equipment
	Responsibility and cooperation	Empathy and public desire
Implications	Academic development	Development of individual competence
		University development
	Social development	Gaining public trust

Based on the results of Table 1, the model of constructive leadership in higher education based on the grounded theory includes 12 components and 9 dimensions. The category of causal conditions included 2 dimensions of the necessity of constructive management (with two components of knowledge management and organizational innovation) and organizational culture (with two components of collaborative management and innovative atmosphere). The category of contextual conditions included 2 dimensions of management maturity (with the component of evaluating and applying policies for constructive management) and the system of fostering change and transformation (with the component of establishing relationships with aligned people and organizations). The category of intervening conditions included the dimension of competition with the surrounding environment and increasing progress (with the component of planning and paying attention to facilities). The category of strategies included two dimensions having facilities and requirements (with the component of financing and equipment) and responsibility and cooperation (with the components of empathy and public demand). Finally, the category of implications included two dimensions of academic development (with 2 components of individual competence development and university development) and social development (with the component of gaining public trust). Based on the dimensions identified for the model of constructive leadership in higher education, the model of constructive leadership in higher education of Urmia University was developed based on the grounded theory, as shown in Figure 1.

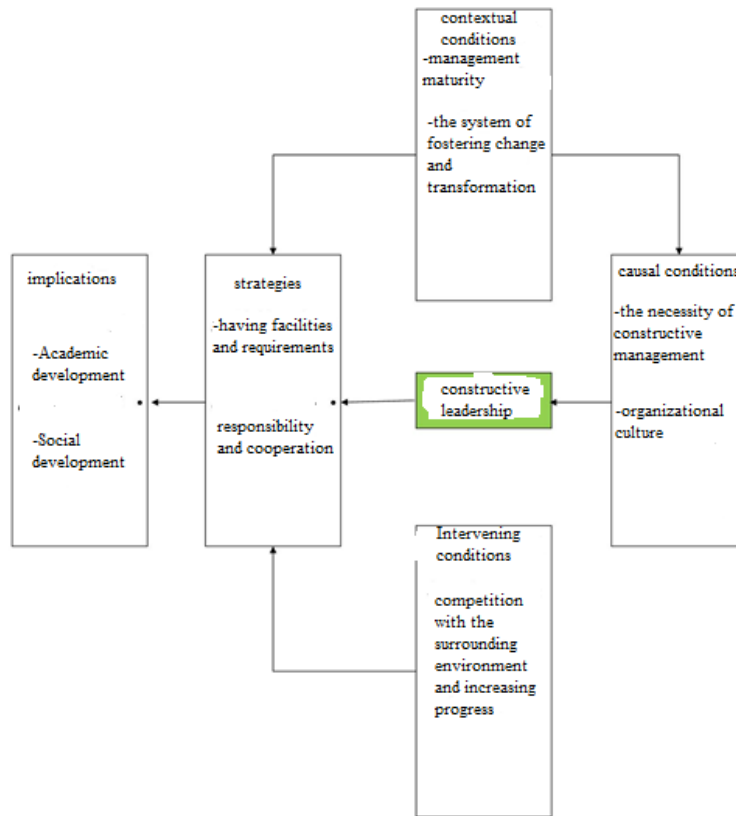


Figure (1): The model of creative leadership in higher education of Urmia University based on the grounded theory

IV. DISCUSSION

Knowledge assets are not sufficient to succeed in a complex and increasingly competitive world. It is also necessary to identify these assets. The most significant and effective thing is that educational organizations can identify these assets and manage them well. Also, as competition becomes complex, innovation is considered one of the primary advantages for the life of educational organizations. All organizations need new and innovative ideas to survive. Innovation can be viewed as an organizational change to respond to the external environment or affect it. Knowledge is considered the most significant factor of production and the determining factor in innovation since knowledge has become available for all people around the world due to the constant accumulation of administrative and technical knowledge over time and with the use of information technology. This study presented a new methodology to integrate two contemporary production revolutions, namely constructive leadership, and innovation. Any successful change should start with some senior managers and other key people who are ready to identify and apply facilities and look at solutions to problems or opportunities as investments. This group of people solves the problems in the first stages of operations to achieve small successes. Such small successes give credibility to operations and have positive impacts on creating and accepting change by employees and faculty members. Strong leadership support (top management) is essential for the continuity and progress of changes and prevents disruption of changes by people who are against changes.

The results showed that the model of constructive leadership in higher education based on grounded theory included 12 components and 9 dimensions. The category of causal conditions included 2 dimensions of the necessity of constructive management (with two components of knowledge management and organizational innovation) and organizational culture (with two components of collaborative management and innovative atmosphere). The category of contextual conditions included 2 dimensions of management maturity (with the component of evaluating and applying policies for constructive management) and the system of fostering change and transformation (with the component of establishing relationships with aligned people and organizations). The category of intervening conditions included the dimension of competition with the surrounding environment and increasing progress (with the component of planning and paying attention to facilities). The category of strategies included two dimensions having facilities and requirements (with the component of financing and equipment) and responsibility and cooperation (with the components of empathy and public demand). Finally, the category of implications included two dimensions of academic development (with 2 components

of individual competence development and university development and progress) and social development (with the component of gaining public trust).

The results of the present study were consistent with those of previous studies in this field. Mousavi et al. (2020), Momenian et al. (2019), and Kiang et al. (2017) are among the most important of these studies. Mousavi et al. (2020) identified the model of educational leaders including 8 indicators of self-knowledge, self-guidance, self-monitoring, self-control, effectiveness, goal-setting, self-motivation, and self-reflection. Momenian et al. (2019) also introduced the primary factors shaping and establishing the creative leadership of managers in education, including four categories of contextual conditions, causal conditions, practical strategies, and axial categories.

V. References

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