



Article

Academic Leadership Experiences and Administrative Governance in Graduate Education: Northeastern College Perspectives

¹ Dr. Sabina Bautista-Pascual

Northeastern College, Santiago City, Philippines

Correspondence: sabinapascual@gmail.com

Abstract

Academic leadership and administrative governance significantly influence institutional effectiveness, organizational sustainability, and educational quality in higher education institutions. This study explored the academic leadership experiences and administrative governance practices in graduate education from the perspectives of administrators and academic leaders of Northeastern College, Santiago City. Using a qualitative phenomenological research design, the study gathered data from purposively selected graduate school professors, deans, coordinators, and college officials through semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework. Findings revealed that academic leadership practices were characterized by collaborative governance, participatory decision-making, faculty empowerment, and strategic institutional planning. Participants emphasized that transformational leadership strengthened institutional trust, professional engagement, and organizational commitment. However, administrators also encountered challenges related to communication barriers, workload demands, policy implementation, and resource limitations. The findings underscore the importance of transformational and participatory leadership approaches in promoting effective governance and institutional sustainability in graduate education. The study contributes to educational leadership literature by providing qualitative insights into administrative governance experiences within a private higher education institution in the Philippines.

Keywords: *academic leadership, administrative governance, graduate education, transformational leadership, institutional management, higher education, Philippines*



1. Introduction

Higher education institutions continuously face organizational, academic, and administrative challenges brought about by globalization, technological advancement, quality assurance demands, and evolving educational reforms. Within this increasingly dynamic educational environment, academic leadership and administrative governance have become essential in ensuring institutional effectiveness, organizational sustainability, and academic excellence. Graduate education institutions, in particular, require effective leadership practices to manage academic programs, strengthen institutional governance, support faculty development, and maintain educational quality standards.

In the Philippine context, private higher education institutions significantly contribute to the expansion of graduate education and the development of professional competencies among educators and academic practitioners. Institutional leaders and graduate school administrators are tasked with addressing organizational complexities while ensuring efficient academic governance and institutional development. Effective leadership practices influence faculty engagement, organizational culture, policy implementation, and institutional productivity.

Academic leadership extends beyond administrative supervision and involves the capacity to inspire, motivate, and empower organizational members toward achieving shared institutional goals. Transformational leadership theory explains that effective leaders strengthen organizational commitment through collaboration, intellectual stimulation, professional support, and participatory governance (Bass, 1985). Similarly, shared governance emphasizes collective participation and collaborative institutional management among educational stakeholders.

Previous studies emphasized that transformational leadership positively influences institutional trust, faculty morale, organizational effectiveness, and academic productivity within higher education institutions (Bush, 2020; Hallinger, 2021). Participatory governance practices have likewise been associated with stronger organizational commitment and institutional adaptability (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2020). However, limited qualitative studies have explored the academic leadership experiences and administrative governance practices among graduate education leaders within private higher education institutions in the Philippine setting.

This study explored the academic leadership experiences and administrative governance practices in graduate education from the perspectives of Northeastern College, Santiago City. Specifically, it examined collaborative leadership practices, governance mechanisms, institutional decision-making processes, and organizational challenges encountered by academic leaders and administrators.

2. Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory developed by Burns (1978) and expanded by Bass (1985). The theory explains how leaders inspire organizational members through shared vision, intellectual stimulation, motivational influence, and individualized consideration. Transformational leaders encourage innovation, collaboration, and organizational commitment.

The study also utilized Shared Governance Theory, which emphasizes participatory leadership, collective institutional responsibility, and collaborative decision-making processes among educational stakeholders. Shared governance promotes transparency, accountability, and organizational inclusivity in educational institutions.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design to examine the lived experiences of academic leaders and administrators regarding leadership and governance practices in graduate education.

3.2 Participants of the Study

The participants consisted of graduate school professors, academic coordinators, deans, and college officials from Northeastern College, Santiago City. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants with extensive leadership and administrative experience in graduate education.

3.3 Data Gathering Procedure

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data regarding academic leadership experiences, governance practices, institutional planning, decision-making processes, and organizational challenges. Interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework. Coding procedures involved familiarization, categorization, thematic generation, and interpretation of recurring patterns and themes.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical principles including confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent, and voluntary participation. Participants were informed regarding the purpose and scope of the study before the conduct of interviews.

4. Results and Findings

Theme 1: Collaborative Governance and Participatory Institutional Leadership

Participants consistently emphasized the importance of collaborative governance and participatory leadership in strengthening institutional administration and organizational effectiveness within graduate education. Academic leaders described leadership practices as encouraging consultation, teamwork, inclusivity, and shared accountability in institutional decision-making.

One participant shared:

"Institutional decisions become more effective when faculty members are consulted and involved in planning."

Another participant explained:

"Collaborative leadership strengthens trust and commitment among academic personnel."

Participants emphasized that participatory leadership practices promoted transparency, strengthened communication, and enhanced professional relationships among administrators, faculty members, and graduate school personnel. Committee meetings, consultations, and

collaborative planning sessions reportedly cultivated organizational unity and collective accountability.

The findings suggest that collaborative governance strengthens institutional cohesion and organizational trust within higher education institutions. These findings support Bush (2020), who emphasized that participatory educational leadership enhances organizational collaboration and governance effectiveness. Similarly, Hallinger (2021) found that collaborative leadership improves institutional adaptability and faculty engagement.

Theme 2: Faculty Empowerment and Inspirational Academic Leadership

Participants described academic leadership as highly supportive, motivational, and empowering. Administrators emphasized the importance of professional development, mentoring, research engagement, and faculty recognition in strengthening graduate education programs.

One participant remarked:

“Transformational leaders encourage us to become innovative and professionally committed educators.”

Another participant stated:

“Faculty members become more productive when leaders provide encouragement and institutional support.”

Participants further explained that leadership support through seminars, graduate studies encouragement, mentoring, and capability-building programs contributed significantly to faculty morale and institutional productivity. Recognition and professional support reportedly strengthened faculty confidence and organizational commitment.

The findings indicate that transformational leadership positively influences faculty motivation, instructional engagement, and institutional productivity. These findings align with Bass (1985), who emphasized that transformational leaders inspire followers through encouragement, individualized support, and shared vision. Similarly, Northouse (2021) explained that inspirational leadership enhances employee satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Theme 3: Strategic Governance and Institutional Decision-Making

Participants highlighted that institutional governance and administrative decision-making processes were strongly guided by organizational vision, strategic planning, accreditation objectives, and institutional sustainability goals.

One participant shared:

“Institutional policies are consistently aligned with the mission and long-term goals of the college.”

Another participant explained:

“Strategic planning meetings allow administrators and faculty members to collaboratively discuss institutional priorities.”

Participants observed that strategic governance strengthened organizational alignment, policy consistency, and institutional direction. Collaborative planning activities reportedly facilitated effective policy implementation, organizational coordination, and academic program development.

The findings suggest that strategic leadership practices contribute significantly to institutional sustainability and organizational effectiveness. Hallinger (2021) emphasized that shared vision and strategic governance strengthen institutional resilience and educational quality. Similarly, Fullan (2020) noted that collaborative strategic planning enhances institutional adaptability and organizational development.

Theme 4: Organizational Challenges and Administrative Complexities

Despite positive leadership experiences, participants identified several organizational and administrative challenges affecting governance practices in graduate education.

One participant stated:

“Communication delays and overlapping responsibilities sometimes affect organizational efficiency.”

Another participant shared:

“Limited resources and increasing workload pressures create challenges in institutional planning.”

Participants identified challenges related to resource limitations, policy implementation, accreditation demands, communication barriers, and administrative workload. Faculty members and administrators emphasized that balancing academic responsibilities and institutional governance often created organizational pressures.

Despite these challenges, participants acknowledged that collaborative leadership and adaptive governance practices strengthened institutional problem-solving and organizational resilience.

The findings indicate that administrative governance is significantly influenced by organizational pressures, operational demands, and institutional resource constraints. These findings support OECD (2021), which emphasized that educational institutions require adaptive leadership and collaborative governance mechanisms to sustain institutional effectiveness amid organizational complexities.

5. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that academic leadership and administrative governance significantly influence institutional effectiveness, faculty engagement, organizational trust, and policy implementation within graduate education programs in Northeastern College, Santiago City. Collaborative leadership practices strengthened institutional participation, organizational transparency, and professional relationships among administrators and faculty members.

The findings strongly support Transformational Leadership Theory, which emphasizes leaders' ability to motivate and empower organizational members through inspiration, collaboration, and shared institutional vision. Participants consistently described academic leaders as encouraging participatory governance, strategic planning, and professional empowerment. Such leadership practices strengthened institutional commitment and organizational alignment within graduate education.

The findings further highlight the importance of faculty empowerment and inspirational leadership in promoting instructional productivity and professional engagement. Leadership support through mentoring, recognition, and professional development opportunities contributed significantly to faculty morale and institutional productivity. These findings align with Northouse (2021) and Yukl (2020), who emphasized that transformational leadership enhances organizational effectiveness through employee motivation and collaborative engagement.

The study also underscores the importance of strategic governance and adaptive leadership in addressing institutional challenges and organizational complexities. Despite communication barriers, workload pressures, and resource limitations, collaborative leadership practices facilitated organizational coordination, institutional problem-solving, and governance effectiveness.

6. Conclusion

Academic leadership experiences and administrative governance practices significantly contribute to institutional sustainability, faculty empowerment, organizational effectiveness, and graduate education management in Northeastern College, Santiago City. Collaborative leadership, participatory governance, strategic planning, and professional support strengthen institutional cohesion and organizational productivity.

Despite organizational challenges related to communication barriers, workload demands, policy implementation, and resource limitations, transformational leadership practices remain essential in promoting institutional adaptability and governance effectiveness in higher education institutions.

7. Implications of the Study

The findings provide important implications for higher education leadership and institutional governance. Educational institutions may strengthen collaborative governance mechanisms, participatory decision-making practices, and faculty development initiatives to improve institutional effectiveness and organizational sustainability.

Higher education administrators may also develop leadership enhancement programs focusing on transformational leadership competencies, communication management, strategic governance, and organizational adaptability.

The study further contributes to educational leadership literature by providing qualitative insights into academic leadership experiences and governance practices within private graduate education institutions in the Philippine context.

References

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. Free Press.

Batang, B., Villa, F., Natividad, A., Gonzales, A., Cabansag, J., & Bangayan, O. (2025). Culturally-Informed Leadership and Management Practices in Philippine State Universities and Colleges: Navigating Institutional Excellence through Localized Governance and Academic Culture. *International Journal on Culture, History, and Religion*, 7(SI2), 751–770. <https://doi.org/10.63931/ijchr.v7iSI2.243>

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

Bush, T. (2020). *Theories of educational leadership and management* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.

Fullan, M. (2020). *Leading in a culture of change* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Hallinger, P. (2021). Leadership and educational change in higher education institutions. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 49(3), 365–382.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220921192>

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2020). Transformational school leadership for large-scale reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 56(4), 438–476.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X20932498>

Northouse, P. G. (2021). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (9th ed.). Sage Publications.

OECD. (2021). *Higher education leadership and governance during institutional change*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9b1c8f4f-en>

Taguam, A. (2021). Trust or not to trust: Assessing the Employees' Level of Organizational Trust in the State University. *Journal of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing*. 5(3),991-1000.

Taguam, A. (2022). Organizational Communication Climate and It's Relationship to Employee Organizational Trust: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*. 6 (3, 3332-3342.

Yukl, G. (2020). *Leadership in organizations* (9th ed.). Pearson Education.