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Mentoring Higher Education Leaders and Managers through Contextual Intelligence

Abstract

This study investigated the mentoring of academics for leadership and management in higher education institutions through the application of contextual intelligence. Experts and professionals generally agree that effective institutional leadership and management mentorship, using contextual knowledge, is crucial for achieving institutional success. The paper aims to illustrate the significance of mentoring institutional leaders and managers using contextual intelligence skills. The dearth of literature on mentoring academics using contextual intelligence in South Africa might be addressed through mentoring, as this practice poses a significant obstacle. The challenges of applying contextual intelligence in mentoring academics are highlighted with a focus on four key areas: mentoring, leadership and management, contextual intelligence, and achieving organisational success. Despite their relatively tiny proportion within the overall framework, these elements exert influence over all aspects of the institution's activities. While tackling each impact individually may result in success, the continuous emergence of new factors makes it unlikely for this method to maintain improvement. The findings illustrate that the perception of improvement is determined by a dynamic and intricate setting. The paper plays a vital role in considering contextual dynamics when mentoring for contextual intelligence.

Keywords: mentoring, contextual intelligence, leadership, management, institutional success

Introduction

Mentoring leaders and managers through contextual intelligence should help higher education professionals tackle various issues, disputes, and problems. Academics need contextual intelligence mentoring to grow professionally and personally for organisational success. Mentoring contextually knowledgeable higher education leaders and managers requires trust and transparency, understanding their circumstances, issues, and goals to provide guidance. Active listening helps them grasp objectives and they attain growth. Their challenges and goals should be addressed in mentorship materials. Identify their strengths and limitations and encouraging engagement may help their professional development. Contextually intelligent academics could transform organisations and improve leadership and management. It is hard to separate mentorship, leadership/management, context, and organisational performance. Successfully guided staff members for leadership and management will know that all academics are social beings and need mentoring, regardless of their rank (lecturer, associate professor, or professor). Competent contextual intelligence leadership and management mentees have good people skills and understand diversity. Organisational and sociocultural contexts

affect mentoring. The institution has the authority to provide competent contextually intelligent mentors to guide academics for leadership and management, and resources should be provided to ensure academics are well equipped for contextual intelligence leadership and management. HEIs expect effective academics to perform. Leadership and management demands and contextual intelligence difficulties should be addressed. Understanding how contextual intelligence leadership and management (CILM) can help HEIs succeed is necessary because contextual intelligence is an emerging theory.

Literature review

Mentoring has two-fold benefits for leaders and managers. Firstly, it aids professional and personal development. Secondly, it facilitates growth as mentors (Shek & Lin, 2015). While leadership and management are separate concepts, they are used interchangeably in South African education. Leadership is indispensable as management alone is inadequate. Based on the Survey on the Global Agenda conducted by the World Economic Forum in 2015, 86% of the 1767 respondents identified leadership crises as the third most prominent concern confronting the entire world. Leadership style mostly concerns the act of influencing individuals, while management primarily concerns the performance of tasks. These two concepts are opposite and interconnected (Chacha, 2022). Leaders have the power to affect an individual's capacity, and inspire, and empower others to make valuable contributions to the achievement of organisational goals. Leaders are distinguished from managers by their ability to exert influence and provide inspiration, rather than relying on power and control. Leadership is a universal concept that encompasses seven interconnected components, which are influenced by various factors. These components include behaviour, relationships, approach, ability/competency/skill, knowledge, personality, and practice. Each of these components originates from a specific notion that uses influence as a penetrating weapon, spreading through individuals and impacting a certain situation.

Leadership demonstrates contextual intelligence by incorporating these elements and intentionally connecting individuals to the specific circumstances they are now facing. Effective leadership is crucial for the success of organisations, and contextual intelligence plays a critical role in increasing it (Marishane, 2020). Mentors exert significant influence over their mentees by possessing attributes associated with power, authority, leadership, and management. Power and authority can be distinguished by their directionality, which can flow in various ways. It can flow downward from a superior to a subordinate, upward from a junior to a senior, horizontally between individuals at the same level but in different departments of an organisation, or diagonally between individuals at different levels and departments of the same organisation. Thus, it is not restricted by any limits or constraints.

Mentors who possess contextual intelligence can exert influence and exercise control over their mentees. The mentor's trait is derived from their knowledge and expertise. Power is the ability to exert control, while authority refers to the legitimate and official entitlement to issue instructions, commands, and judgments. Power is used in a professional context and is a formal authority granted to the position held (Bush & Glover, 2016). Mentors are those who possess leadership qualities and wield authority, which grants them the ability to shape the actions and conduct of their mentees. They can exert control and wield influence through their power. Their authority is not acquired through their title or job description and is not dependent on hierarchical status, but rather

must be won from the mentee. The position held by a leader grants them authority, and the ability to wield authority is acquired. Authority adheres to the hierarchical structure, possesses legitimacy, and cascades in a downward direction from superiors to subordinates. The environment, people, work, and working conditions are influenced by leadership and management aspects (McKimm & O'Sullivan, 2015).

Why should mentors possess management skills?

To achieve a goal, managers exercise control over a group or an organisation. The characteristics of contextually intelligent mentors include being goal-oriented, being policy-guided, and deploying institutional resources (human, financial, technological, intellectual, and physical), structures, activities, infrastructure, services, systems, and processes (McKimm & O'Sullivan, 2015). Mentors are responsible for guiding and managing mentees by ensuring that the day-to-day duties of leadership and management are acquired and that they are administered. They are in a position to exert influence over other people and bring about changes in behaviour. Planning, organising, leading/directing, delegating, and controlling are some of the responsibilities of mentors (Leiber, 2022). When it comes to management, they are responsible for responding to the internal and external environmental dynamics of an institution, and their performance is determined by the attainment of the organisation's goals. In the absence of the mentor's leadership and management abilities, mentees would be unable to achieve the organisation's vision, or to take concrete measures, and they would not be able to accomplish the goals that are necessary to achieve their vision (Sanyal, 2017).

Leadership-management nexus in higher education

During the process of mentoring, leadership and management work together harmoniously. Symbolically, they embody contrasting aspects of a single entity and collectively determine its value (Marishane, 2020). Although they possess distinct functions, techniques, and foci, they ultimately have a common organisational aim. Effective higher education mentors demonstrate a harmonious combination of leadership and management skills, as well as exhibit a constructive leadership impact and adept resource management.

The interchangeable usage of leadership and management in the South African educational environment may lead to conceptual, theoretical, and practical confusion. Organisational instability can arise when there is a lack of distinction between the vocabulary, beliefs, techniques, and practices of leadership and management (McKimm & O'Sullivan, 2015). This phenomenon arises when individuals are devalued and treated as mere commodities. The two-way connection between leaders and followers involves competent mentors to assist mentees in attaining goals ingrained in the institution's vision and values. The mentor/leader acquires prestige by actively engaging and assisting mentees in accomplishing tasks (Shek & Lin, 2015). Genuine contextual intelligent mentorship imparts the qualities of flexibility and adaptability. An adept mentor who has cultivated favourable connections will bolster the efficacy of formal endeavours within the institution, and the bedrock of mentorship will manifest in the influence they wield over their subordinates (mentees).

The mentoring process

In an ideal world, a mentor-mentee relationship would last for many years and help both parties develop professionally and personally (Shek & Lin, 2015). In a mentoring relationship, both parties benefit from the mentoring relationship: the mentor helps the mentee grow professionally and personally, and the mentee helps the mentor learn and grow. Mentors employ a wide range of strategies, such as providing constructive criticism while also offering words of encouragement, providing indirect coaching, and focusing on the procedural elements of career advising (Kutz & Bamford-Wade, 2013). Evidence also suggests that certain female leaders are great mentors, and the examples demonstrate that female leaders also mentor, dispelling the stereotype (Sanyal, 2017). When employees receive mentoring, they can grow in their positions and become more effective leaders who can inspire others to follow their lead. Mentoring is a lifelong process of empowering one another via encouragement that leads to greater possibilities for growth and advancement. The three pillars of a successful mentoring relationship are transparency, dedication, and complete trust (Goodsett, 2021). The mentor's good attitude, admirable character traits, and understanding of institutional processes regarding people's abilities and limitations are all signs of a well-rounded mentor.

When communicating organisational goals to a mentee, a mentor should never stop practicing what they preach. Institutions ought to legitimise mentoring programs despite their voluntary nature due to the inadequacy of some leaders and managers (Shek & Lin, 2015). Organisations and individuals alike will be unable to adapt to new circumstances in the absence of mentorship. By integrating diverse ideas for a common purpose and being responsive to contextual dynamics, mentored staff members can achieve goals and realize the institution's vision. This is in what Marishane (2020) calls a VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity & ambiguity) sphere of operation and influence, which combines the influences of change and its dynamics (Sarkar, 2016; Breen, 2017).

What is contextual intelligence?

A simple formula can be used to express the definition of contextual intelligence: CI = Situation (context), I = intelligence, and E = experience. According to Kutz and Bamford-Wade's (2013) definition of contextual intelligence, there are three main issues: first, that context/situation is too internal; second, that it is too external; and third, that the identification of each event or occurrence is determined by human variables. Intelligence is data-informed knowledge with practical applications. The capacity to learn from one's experiences is what we mean when we talk about experience. As a result of their innate and rapid awareness of the ever-changing contextual factors at play in any given situation, mentors who possess contextual intelligence can guide their mentees to act in ways that are most effective given those circumstances (Shek & Lin, 2015). The capacity to communicate and accomplish institutional goals, as well as to establish the tone and speed for the institution's operations, are essential abilities for a professional mentor to have when mentoring academics in higher education. Mentors can aid mentees in achieving long-term success by using contextual knowledge to enhance mentees' institutional context and objectives (Marishane, 2020). Contextual intelligence is essential for improving and achieving organisational goals in the face of ever-possible institutional context changes. If the mentee is to maintain the success of the company even after the mentor has departed, the mentorship has been successful.

Leading and managing through contextual intelligence

The leadership and management environment, including research and internationalisation, community engagement, teaching and learning, and social responsiveness and its impact, can be improved through redesigning the organisation. This can be achieved through contextual intelligence. Organisational culture is defined by shared beliefs, needs, objectives, and vision; it is the product of a leadership and management environment that fosters cooperation (Bush & Glover, 2016). Institutional values risk being lost if mentee needs are not considered in institutional development to help the mentee fit in with the organisation. When people stop caring about the organisation's ideals, they get disillusioned and may not give their all on the job. To help their mentees connect and adapt easily, mentors should rethink leadership and management practices (Shek & Lin, 2015). When mentoring, a contextually intelligent leader and manager (CILM) makes sure the mentee understands the organisation's mission and values. Mentors, while guiding their mentees through a reorganisation, should lay the groundwork for a collaborative culture that strengthens ties to the local community.

CILM in the African context

In South Africa and West Africa, researchers looked at effective management and leadership briefly. Whether leaders and managers in South Africa can adapt to various situations depends on contextual circumstances, just as it does in other nations. According to research done in West Africa (Bush & Glover, 2016), the region's dominant managerialism in the institutional setting is responsible for the hierarchical structure that enables effective leadership and management. Geographical considerations, historical disparities, cultural diversity, and socioeconomic status all have an effect on management and leadership in South Africa. The leaders and managers who benefited most from mentorship had a firm conviction in their unwavering resolve to achieve their goals, according to Kamper (2008). They were devoted to achieving academic greatness by being courageous, self-disciplined, and resilient. The majority of supervisors and executives exhibited empathy and could put themselves in others' shoes. Cooperation, empowerment, cooperation, and networking were values they wholeheartedly upheld, and they were passionate were enthusiastic about helping individuals succeed.

Research design and methodology

The purpose of this conceptual paper was to outline how using contextual intelligence can assist faculty members in leadership and management roles within higher education institutions. Knowledge boundaries are recognized and applied in contexts different from their original development by contextual awareness of leadership and management. For example, a mentor who is very competent in contextual intelligence can swiftly guide a recently hired employee through a variety of challenges related to leadership and management because of their extensive knowledge in these areas. Behaviour (insight, foresight, and hindsight), relationships (self, others, and the world), approach (theoretical and practical perspectives), abilities (analytical, creative, and practical), knowledge (practices, abilities, behaviour, personality, and context), and practices (directing, developing, designing, and focusing) are all ways in which one's

contextual intelligence as a leader and manager can be observed. A mentor with high contextual intelligence can help their mentees or new co-workers evaluate what they have learned, spark fresh ideas, and hone their practical abilities. The mentee is expected to mimic the mentor's actions to gain contextual information, which can be seen through three lenses: the past, the present, and the future (Kutz & Bamford-Wade, 2013). Through their interactions with others, with themselves, and with the world at large, mentors exhibit their worldview. Assisting, guiding, and acquiring knowledge are integral to contextual intelligence. In addition to displaying wonderful qualities and beliefs, the mentor's expertise of institutional practices helps him guide the mentee in what he can and cannot accomplish. The mentorship of institutional staff for the promotion of positive values relies heavily on attitude (Holmes, 2005). The mentee exemplifies strong moral principles and consistently puts them into practice, which allows the mentor to convey the organisation's goals to the mentee. In order to help their mentees, thrive and gain institutional values, mentors inform them about institutional plans connected to institutional growth and address their requirements. Mentors risk alienating their mentees by acting in a way that betrays a lack of investment in the organization's mission and values. If a mentor is good at what he does, he trains his mentees to carry on when he is not there. Contextual intelligence and adaptation are necessary responses to the inevitable dynamics of any given institution. Organisations and their employees suffer when mentorship programs are absent. The mentor's responsibility is to help the mentee become more contextually savvy in their leadership and management by rethinking existing systems and processes.

Discussion

The objective of this conceptual study was to delineate the sequential procedures of employing contextual intelligence to support faculty members in leadership and managerial positions inside higher education institutions. Contextually aware leadership and management understand and apply knowledge boundaries in different contexts from their initial formation. For instance, a highly skilled mentor with strong contextual intelligence can efficiently assist a newly hired employee in navigating various leadership and management issues due to their considerable expertise in these domains. Contextual intelligence in leadership and management can be observed through various aspects, including insight, foresight, and hindsight in behaviour, relationships with oneself, others, and the world, theoretical and practical perspectives in approach, analytical, creative, and practical abilities, knowledge in practices, abilities, behaviour, personality, and context, as well as directing, developing, designing, and focusing practices. A mentor possessing a high level of contextual intelligence can assist their mentees or new colleagues in assessing their acquired knowledge, stimulating innovative concepts, and refining their practical skills.

The mentee is required to imitate the mentor's activities to acquire contextual knowledge, which may be analysed from three perspectives: the past, the present, and the future (Kutz & Bamford-Wade, 2013). Mentors demonstrate their viewpoint through their relationships with others, themselves, and the world. Assisting, guiding, and learning knowledge are essential components of contextual intelligence. Mentors assist mentees in comprehending their own strengths and opportunities for growth by imparting knowledge about institutional protocols. The capacity to adapt to changing circumstances and solve issues in management and leadership are signs of contextual

intelligence. Through the application of new behaviours and skills in leadership and management, a mentee who possesses contextual intelligence can transform a complex and varied scenario. According to Heideggerian Perspective, a leader or manager who is contextually intelligent can maintain harmony among the competing demands of the workplace, the organisation, and the industry (Tomkins & Simpson, 2015). Because of their inherent connection to the natural world, they influence how leadership engages with it.

Conclusion

Contextual intelligence-based mentorship programs should help college leaders and managers handle a variety of issues. Academics need contextual intelligence coaching to grow professionally and personally for organisational success. Contextual intelligence helps academics reorganise their institutions for better management and leadership. Because of this, mentoring, leadership/management, context, and organisational performance are intertwined. Mentored staff will recognise that academics at all levels (lecturer, associate professor, and professor) need mentorship since they are social beings and not experts. Successful contextual intelligence and management mentees have great interpersonal skills and a deep grasp of diversity. Mentoring is linked to social and organisational environments. Academic mentorship through contextual intelligence involves two main factors: first, whether the institution can assign qualified mentors with this skill set to help academics with leadership and management, and second, whether enough resources are available to help academics succeed. HEIs expect successful professors to meet the requirements. This requires addressing leadership, management, and contextual intelligence demands. Contextual intelligence leadership and management (CILM) was tested in HEIs due to its uniqueness.

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