THE IMPORTANCE AND PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR BPR OF UNIVERSITIES IN CHINA

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays in China, the higher education is changed to be popularized and to cultivate developing talents that is the way for university to increase more students. Meanwhile the traditional process and mode of educational management cannot satisfy the new demands in the new era, therefore the trends of educational reform that can create new system and improve the quality has become an important issue. That’s why university should try to reengineer the outmoded management process. Reform and developing is always the theme of the administration of university. Organization Business Process Reengineering is a theory and methodology from business administration and becomes an inner demand and conscious option, that is one of a good method used to cure the chronic disease of higher education in China. However, during the actual mechanical process, difficulties are more than expectation, thus, the transformational leadership is necessary for this “revolution”. This essay will firstly explain the definition of Business Process Reengineering and transformational leadership, followed by describing the difficulties and problems. Then, it analyzes the significance and necessity of transformational leadership. The concept of transformational leadership as a leadership theory was by Burns. This concept was used in political organizations initially. Bass introduced the concept of transformational leadership into business organizations, it can improve the ability of employees, discover the potential of the organization, and ultimately realize organizational change and innovation by promoting cooperative behavior within the organization. Bass proposed the four dimensions of transformational leadership; charismatic leadership, visionary motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. It can be seen that transformational leadership is process-oriented, which emphasizes the integrity of the organization and aims to promote the development and transformation of the organization through the development of organization members. Finally, it prospects the future which is about improving the effectiveness and efficiency of leadership.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership; Business Process Reengineering; Higher Education Administration

I. INTRODUCTION

Talents are the power to drive the developing of society, and the universities are the bases to cultivate the talents. Nowadays in China, the higher education is changed to be popularized, thus the number of students increase significantly. The traditional process and mode of educational management in universities cannot satisfy the new demands in the new era. Meanwhile, stronger competition requires higher standard of universities and better quality
of talents cultivating. How to adapt the trends of educational reform and create new system and mechanism of university management in order to improve the education quality has become an important issue which most of the universities in China faced to. With the development of information technology, universities should try to reengineer the outmoded management process just like what corporations have done, in order to improve the management, service, performance and quality to meet the requirements of the nation, society, parents are students. However, the business process reengineering is not an easy job and difficult to be successful. One of the significant reason is people always lose the sight of the leadership of leaders during the BPR. The failure of BPR is often caused by the shortage of transformational leadership; therefore, to explore the transformational leadership is quite meaningful and essential to the universities BPR in China according to transformational leadership theory that has attracted a significant amount of scholarly attention from across disciplines. This theory originated with the work of Burns (1978) and later was developed by Bass (1985, 1988) and others (Avolio & Bass, 1988; Tichy & Devanna, 1986; Antonakis & House, 2002). The major premise of transformational leadership theory is the leader’s ability to motivate followers to accomplish more than they planned to accomplish (Krishnan, 2005). Transformational leaders inspire followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the organization and are capable of having a profound and extraordinary effect on their followers (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

In China also transformational leadership provides a new perspective context that is ignored the Western leadership literature. It also offers a clearer understanding of how best leadership practice combines with traditional Chinese wisdom to do a better job in accounting for the leader-follower dynamics in contemporary Chinese society. (Lau, W. K. 2012)

II. THEORY INTERPRETATION

1. Business Process Reengineering

The management theory of Business Process Reengineering (BPR) put was forward by famous American management Hammer M. and James Champy J. (2007) in the Harvard Business Review. The core of it is to fundamentally rethink and thoroughly redesign the business process of the enterprise, so as to significantly improve and promote the cost, quality, service, efficiency and other aspects by integrating the existing resources of the enterprise. This theory has attracted widespread attention as soon as it was put forward, was regarded as an important tool for companies to regain their competitive advantage in the United States, and then was gradually introduced to the reform and development of government agencies and universities. According to Lichao S. (2016), the application of business process reengineering in colleges and universities means that modern management idea, market operation mechanisms and information technology are applied to the management of colleges and universities to coordinate the joint work between various functional departments, so as to simplify various business processes and improve the efficiency of teachers and students. Jiping C. (2017) pointed out that there is a certain inevitability and necessity for the introduction of education management process reengineering methods into Chinese universities, which is the inherent demand and conscious choice for the reform, innovation and development of higher education in China, and it is an important method for higher education to promote better and faster development.

2. Transformational Leadership

The concept of transformational leadership as a leadership theory was first put forward by the political sociologist Burns in his book Leadership in 1978. He analyzed political leaders and divided them into transformational leadership and transactional leadership. This concept was used in political organizations initially. Bass developed Burns’ research results and formally introduced the concept of transformational leadership into business organizations in 1985 to describe the leadership model of business leaders. Sitkin (1995) believes that transformational leaders can raise the hierarchy of need of subordinates by building a common vision, so that
subordinates can gradually grow into an organizational leader. At the same time, it can improve the ability of employees, discover the potential of the organization, and ultimately realize organizational change and innovation by promoting cooperative behavior within the organization. Bass proposed the four dimensions of transformational leadership, namely, charismatic leadership, visionary motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Specifically, it means that leaders must lead by example, infect subordinates through their own good quality and practice, so that they can actively participate in collective actions; employees can see the bright prospects of the collective through vision incentives, and improve their work effort and efficiency; improve the work ability of employees through Intellectual development; understand the feelings of subordinates, pay attention to their needs through individualized consideration, and form a relationship of mutual encouragement and improvement. It can be seen that transformational leadership is process-oriented, which emphasizes the integrity of the organization and aims to promote the development and transformation of the organization through the development of organization members (Runkai, J. 2017). The study of transformational leadership in schools was originated in the 1990s. Chinese scholars gradually began to pay attention to the study of transformational leadership in schools in the early 21st century. Among them, Peng L. and Tian Z. (2013) found through research that under the special cultural background of China, transformational leadership can also be a four-factor structure, namely, visionary motivation, moral example, charismatic leadership and individualized consideration.

3. The Urgency and Practical Problems of BPR in Colleges and Universities

After experienced rapid development at the end of the 1990s, China’s colleges and universities have expanded rapidly both in the scale of education and the number of students, while it has inevitably brought a series of problems. These problems have also become the reasons why leaders of colleges and universities are firmly determined to change the traditional management system and mechanisms, organizational structures, and work processes. They are also obstacles in the BPR.

1. Outdated management concepts in university lacking advance and scientificalness

Just entering the adult stage, which are directly related to the physical and mental health of college students and their academic and career development. The management goals and methods for them should be scientific and professional, and should keep pace with the times, follow the laws of education, and pay attention to the quality of talent training. However, based on the viewpoint of Dongji Tao Z. (2014), China’s current administrative management system has led to unclear boundaries between administrative power and academic power in colleges and universities, the administratization of academic resource allocation, and the deep-rooted official-oriented idea. It implements the same operating mechanism as the government in management model, and the administrative department holds a prominent dominant position. The hierarchical system still exists. The lifelong system, special treatment of cadres, and the circumstances in which they can be promoted but can not be dismissed are all unscientific management models that do not follow the laws of education.

2. Single method and low efficiency of universities management

Affected by traditional management models and concepts, colleges and universities are often accustomed to setting up majors and organizing teaching in accordance with the requirements of the higher-level competent authorities following the ideas from concepts to models and then to specific measures. For example, the professional teaching plan is unified, the syllabus and curriculum are the same, the content is single, the form is old lacking characteristics, flexibility, and pertinence. Hong Z. (2017) and Dongting W. (2018) mentioned that the dogmatic management cannot fundamentally mobilize teachers' enthusiasm for work, and enhance teachers' sense of responsibility and sense of belonging. In terms of the specific implementation, a set of standardized management standards and systems have not been well formed, and they are accustomed to solve problems using
empiricism. The subjectivity, blindness and randomness of this kind of management have improved but still exist. Especially in the current situation, they are afraid of problems in management, dare not take responsibility, do not seek merit, but seek no mistakes. They are unwilling to reform and innovate in management models and methods, but to be satisfied with maintaining the status quo.

3. University management has strengthened the management and control of students but neglected service for individual needs of students

Students are the training objects of higher education. From the perspective of modern western management, supervisor (colleges) and supervisee (students) are both the main body, and only placing the supervisor and supervisee at the same level and form a structure of equal communication and interaction can the function of university education management be fully brought into play. However, things do not turn out as our wishes. For a long time, China’s universities have overemphasized the standardization and standardization of education but ignored the subjective role of students, which results in lack of vitality in student management and effective communication mechanisms, so it’s rigid and stiff. Even many supervisors believe that students are not mature in thinking and not comprehensive in considering problems since they just enter into adult life, so simple working methods are enough for them. This kind of ignorance of students’ plasticity and flexibility, and ignorance of students’ learning and innovation abilities will affect the development of students throughout their university career and even their entire life. In addition, as West-Burnham(2010) mentioned that the teaching methods and content are outdated. They are only satisfied with the one-way dissemination of knowledge or even full-fledged teaching, which does not give students sufficient time to think about problems, nor does it give students opportunities to communicate and express opinions, which completely neglects the main role of students, leads to poor communication between teachers and students and lacking of interaction, and restricts the development of students' subjective initiative.

4. College supervisors are intermingled in ability

Training of high-quality talents requires a high-quality education management team. On the whole, the quality of education management personnel in colleges and universities is still uneven. For example, some supervisors have backward educational management concepts, poor business skills, and cannot master basic modern information technology proficiently. They do not understand the methods of educational management under new situation and new era, and cannot make scientific plans for educational management. Some are even laymen in educational management. For another example, some supervisors rely too much on administrative management experience, but do not learn, understand, or respect the laws of education, which results in deviations in handling problems; there are also prevarications for some supervisors or functional departments who waste a lot of time and energy on the work process lacking of service awareness, communication and cooperation capabilities, which seriously affects the efficiency and effectiveness of management. What's more, some of them are vested interests under the current system, and reforms will affect their vested interests. Therefore, they resists the reform publicly and secretly to safeguard their vested interests.

Guiding Significance of Transformational Leadership to the BPR in Colleges and Universities

It is not difficult to see that, on the one hand, in terms of the current situation of university management, it is urgent to break the original framework and process and conduct transformational reengineering. But at the same time, they are facing such internal and external troubles. Therefore, it is conceivable that what kind of resistance will be faced if university management wants to carry out BPR reforms. This requires people who lead this reform to have transformational leadership. According to the meaning of transformational leadership, we can sort out its practical guiding significance for the BPR of colleges and universities:
Strengthen psychological empowerment and weaken the resistance of university supervisor to BPR

Psychological empowerment is a kind of process or psychological state, which is manifested as an individual's systematic positioning of his work role. It has four aspects, namely, self-efficacy, impact, meaning and self-determination. According to the research of Peng L. and Tian Z. (2013), the four dimensions of transformational leadership, namely, charismatic leadership, visionary motivation, moral example, and individualized consideration can all influence employees' satisfaction with their work through psychological empowerment. In other words, on the one hand, if the supervisor can formulate a long-term development plan for the department or organization in which he or she works, and integrate the work of the employees with the long-term development of the organization, the employees will feel that their work is meaningful and will identify with the development goal of organization, so they will be more willing to work hard for the organization. On the other hand, if supervisor pay attention to ethics and set an example, subordinates will have confidence in the supervisor's decision and will feel that their work is valuable, which will improve Employees' job satisfaction.

Various reforms in university management, especially reforms such as BPR, are bound to affect the rights and interests of certain vested interests. In order to protect their own interests, they will resist the reform publicly or secretly. In front of such problems, reform leaders can enhance the psychological empowerment of personnel at all levels with transformational leadership theory. Zhicun S. (2011) states that first of all, leaders can convey the beautiful vision of BPR to all types of personnel at all levels of the university through seminars, etc., so that all faculty and staff can clarify the true meaning and significance of reform, and make it clear that BPR is closely related to their own work and interests, so that the whole staff agrees with the reform plan and makes efforts for it. Secondly, leaders at all levels, headed by the principal, should pay attention to set moral example and lead by example in the process of BPR. At the same time, it is necessary to carry out individualized consideration from time to time, so that people who suffer short-term or apparent damage in interests could feel that the leader is standing with them, thereby weakening their resistance and slowly recovering satisfaction with their work.

Emphasize procedural justice and eliminate the influence of bureaucracy in resources allocation of colleges and universities

Procedural justice is a kind of organizational fairness, which refers to employees' perception of the fairness of the procedures and methods used to determine the results, including employee participation, consistency, fairness, and rationality. Procedural justice affects employees' recognition of transformational leadership and determines the extent to which they recognize and accept the influence of transformational leadership behavior. From the employees' point of view, procedural justice can serve as a measure of the credibility and correctness of the leadership, and the sense of procedural justice can therefore affect the employees' trust to the leader. If employees perceive that the organization's decision-making process is just, it is easier for them to identify with the organization and its representatives.

In the management process of colleges and universities, due to the system and mechanism, it is extremely vulnerable to be affected by official-cored idea. In the allocation such as academic resources, there is often a situation where "high-level leaders have the right to make final decision". Zhicun S. (2011) also states this resource allocation principle based on bureaucracy directly links administrative power with economic interests, and drives more people to chase administrative power. This has a serious impact on the quality of talent training in universities, and it is also easy to breed campus corruption. And BPR is bound to be a "de-administration" process, which also hinders the advancement of it. Therefore, one of the most important goals of BPR is to enable resource allocation procedures to be just (Lijuan L., 2014). Universities and colleges should establish and improve resource allocation mechanisms and teacher evaluation mechanisms to make the operation of these two.

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mechanisms be just, open and transparent, so that resources can truly be assigned to people who have the ability, need, and are willing to research. Therefore, reform leaders should also pay attention to practice, impartially execute, set a good example, and establish prestige, by which the subordinates could get a higher sense of procedural justice, and have a high degree of trust and recognition of the leader's behavior. Therefore, in the process of promoting the BPR, they will get more understanding, cooperation and support from the subordinates.

**Improve the psychological ownership of the organization and mobilize the enthusiasm of subordinates**

Psychological ownership refers to a person’s sense of possession of an object, that is, an individual’s state of consciousness that a part of another person or organization belongs to himself, which is a manifestation of a stronger sense of belonging and identity. In the field of organizational behavior, researchers are concerned about organizational psychological ownership, that is, the sense of possession taking the entire organization as a goal. Transformational leadership can enhance the organizational psychological ownership of the subordinate through moral example, individualized consideration and charismatic leadership, so that they can have positive emotions and sense of responsibility for the organization, and form the idea of “this is my organization” (Davies, 2010). Employees who have this idea can take the initiative to assume more responsibilities for the organization that do not belong to them, and closely link the prosperity and decline of the organization with themselves.

The doctrine of the mean is a traditional Chinese culture, and affected by it, we often show that we abide by our superiors or try our best to avoid interpersonal conflicts when we deal with interpersonal relations. In the face of unfair allocation of resources, university supervisors often remain silent or on the sidelines. Few people would stand up to question and resist it, which will directly lead to greater resistance to BPR. In the face of this situation, leaders should take the initiative to care for the work and family life of their subordinates through individualized consideration and moral example, so that their subordinates feel warm and safe, and have a sense of belonging and responsibility to the school; secondly, the leader shall inspire and encourage subordinates to express new opinions with their personality charm and wisdom, so that subordinates dare to face the problems in the reform process such as BPR; finally, the leader shall use visionary motivation to encourage subordinates to understand the meaning of the work, let them see the bright prospects of BPR, and let them realize that BPR is closely related to themselves. These methods can enhance the subordinate's organizational psychological ownership and mobilize their enthusiasm and positiveness.

**Outlook: how to improve the efficiency of transformational leadership in universities should be keep exploring.**

Obviously, while facing the business process reengineering, transformational leadership is compulsory for this campaign. Thus, the importance and signicance is self-evident. Nevertheless, in fact, the efficiency of transformational leadership is still not good enough. In 1960s, there were already many researches on school leadership in the developed countries. These researches were helpful to adjust the education policies, improve the strength of schools and lead the reform. Such researches are valuable for Chinese researchers to reference. In addition, scientific leading structure and harmonious leading group are also the foundation for improving the leading efficiency. Universities in China should follow the sustainable development principle and update the new leading concept to explore the way of developing and reforming. Then universities could achieve the vision and mission during the development.

**REFERENCES**


