

Commodification Of Education In Transactional Leadership (A Literature Review Study)

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Abstract

Higher education is increasingly seen as a commodity that can be bought and sold in the global market. This phenomenon emerges along with the development of a culture of capitalism that penetrates into the academic realm. This research examines the role of transactional leadership in the commodification of higher education in Indonesia. Using a case study approach of literature review from various journals, this research investigates how transactional leadership practices contribute to the transformation of education into an economically fungible product. The research findings reveal that transactional leadership encourages the creation of a management system that is oriented towards financial gain. Students are viewed as consumers, while education becomes a service that must be sold competitively. Transactional leaders tend to adopt business strategies such as aggressive marketing, diversification of study programs, and exploitation of human resources to maximize institutional income. Furthermore, this study analyzes the impact of education commodification on learning quality, academic integrity, and the welfare of the academic community. The results show that commodification can sacrifice essential aspects of education, such as intellectual development, character building, and the pursuit of scientific truth, in order to pursue financial goals. This study concludes that transactional leadership has the potential to change the face of higher education into a pure business activity, with significant consequences for the quality and purpose of education itself. The findings make an important contribution to the discussion on the direction of higher education in Indonesia and the role of leadership in determining the values embraced by educational institutions.

Keywords: *Commodification, Higher Education, Transactional Leadership, Education Management, Academic Capitalism.*

INTRODUCTION

Higher education in Indonesia has undergone a significant transformation in recent decades. The shift from the paradigm of education as a public service to a tradable commodity has become a global trend. This phenomenon has been triggered by the increasing influence of neoliberalism and capitalism ideologies in academia (Naidoo, 2003; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Higher education is now seen as an industrial sector that must be managed efficiently and financially profitably.

One of the factors driving the commodification of education is the application of business management principles in the management of educational institutions. The transactional leadership style, which focuses on the exchange relationship between leaders and subordinates, has been a model widely adopted by leaders in higher education (Basham, 2012; Pounder, 2001). In this context, leaders offer rewards or punishments to staff and students as a way to motivate and achieve organizational goals.

Transactional leadership is often associated with target- and results-oriented management approaches, and an emphasis on efficiency and productivity (Bass, 1994). In a higher education environment, this may encourage leaders to treat education as a commodity to be sold competitively in the global market. Students are seen as consumers, while academic degrees become products that must be aggressively marketed (Naidoo, 2005).

While the commodification of education can increase institutional revenues and promote operational efficiency, it also attracts criticism and concern. Some scholars argue that commodification can erode the essential values of education, such as intellectual development, character building and the pursuit of scientific truth (Bok, 2003; Giroux, 2002). In addition, there is a risk of exploitation of human resources and a decline in the quality of learning when education is managed like a business.

Transactional leadership and transformational leadership were also researched by Timothy who analyzed 87 studies to test the relative validity of these two leadership styles. They found that transformational leadership is generally more effective than transactional leadership, but certain components of transactional leadership (such as contingent rewards) are also highly effective. This study provides important insights into how these two leadership styles relate to various organizational outcomes.

Meanwhile, according to Nguni, the research was conducted in Tanzania and focused on the impact of transactional leadership on primary school teachers. The researchers investigated how this leadership style affects teachers' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. The results show that transformational leadership has a stronger influence on these variables compared to transactional leadership in the context of primary schools in Tanzania.

This study aims to explore the relationship between transactional leadership and the commodification of higher education in Indonesia. Using a case study approach, this research will analyze how transactional leadership practices in higher education contribute to the transformation of education into a traded commodity. The findings of this study are expected to provide new insights into the impact of transactional leadership on the direction and values of higher education in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to explore the relationship between educational commodification and transactional leadership in the context of higher education. SLR is a systematic and structured method of identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant studies that have been published previously (Cronin et al., 2008).

Search Strategy

A comprehensive literature search was conducted on several major electronic databases, such as Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar. Keyword combinations used included commodification of education, transactional leadership, higher education, education management, and academic capitalism. In addition, additional articles were searched through cross-referencing of relevant studies.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and quality of the included studies, inclusion and exclusion criteria were set as follows:

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Studies that addressed the commodification of education and/or transactional leadership in the context of higher education.
2. Studies published within the time span of 2000-2023.
3. Studies that use qualitative, quantitative, or mixed research methods.
4. Studies published in English or Indonesian.

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Studies that address commodification or transactional leadership outside the context of higher education.
2. Studies in the form of books, book chapters, or dissertations/theses.
3. Studies that do not have full text access.

Study Selection Process

The study selection process was conducted in several stages. First, titles and abstracts were screened to identify relevant studies based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Then, the full texts of the studies that passed the initial screening were re-examined to ensure their appropriateness to the research objectives. This selection process was conducted independently by two researchers, and any disagreements would be resolved through discussion and consultation with a third researcher if needed.

Data Extraction and Quality Assessment

Data extracted from eligible studies include general information (authors, year of publication, country), research objectives, research methods, sample/population, data collection instruments/techniques, and key findings. Study quality assessment will also be conducted using criteria appropriate to the type of research (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed).

Data Synthesis

The extracted data will be synthesized narratively to identify key themes and emerging patterns related to the relationship between commodification of education and leadership. This synthesis will be done by considering the methodological strength, findings, and context of the studies

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of the systematic literature review will be reported according to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) reporting guidelines (Moher et al., 2009). The report will include a flowchart of study selection, characteristics of included studies, quality assessment, and synthesis of key findings.

By using a systematic and structured systematic literature review method, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the relationship between education commodification and transactional leadership in the context of higher education, as well as identify gaps in the existing literature and directions for further research.

Findings

After conducting a systematic search on several major databases, a total of 37 studies that met the inclusion criteria were obtained. The studies were then analyzed and synthesized to identify key themes related to the relationship between commodification of education and transactional leadership in the context of higher education.

1. The relationship between commodification of education and transactional leadership. Findings from several studies indicate a strong relationship between the commodification of higher education and transactional leadership. Research by Naidoo and Jamieson (2005) in the UK revealed that transactional leaders tend to treat students as consumers and emphasize commercial aspects in the management of institutions. A similar study by Basham (2012) in the United States also found that transactional leadership encourages the exploitation of the academic workforce and decreases the quality of learning in an effort to maximize financial gain.

2. Negative impacts of education commodification.

Most of the studies analyzed identified the negative impacts of higher education commodification. Some of these impacts include:

- Overemphasis on commercial and financial aspects, neglecting core values of education such as intellectual development and character building (Giroux, 2002; Saunders, 2010).
- Exploitation of the academic workforce, such as increased workload, decreased welfare, and loss of academic autonomy (Canaan & Shumar, 2008; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).
- Decreased quality of learning due to an emphasis on cost efficiency and increased lecturer-student ratios (Lange, 2014; Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005).
- Loss of public accountability and shifting institutional priorities from educational to profit-making missions (Bok, 2003; Giroux, 2002).

3. Factors driving the commodification of education

Some of the factors identified as driving the commodification of higher education include:

- The adoption of business management principles and transactional leadership styles in the management of institutions (Basham, 2012; Pounder, 2001).
- Financial pressures due to declining public funding and global competition (Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).
- The influence of neoliberalism and capitalism ideologies in education policy (Giroux, 2002; Saunders, 2010).
- The demands of the labor market and industry that regard education as a means to produce job-ready graduates (Lange, 2014; Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005).

4. Resistance and alternative solutions.

Although the commodification of education appears to be an unavoidable trend, some studies explore forms of resistance and alternative solutions. A study by Canaan and Shumar (2008) identified a resistance movement among academics against commodification practices. Meanwhile, other studies suggest the application of transformational leadership models or academic values-oriented leadership as alternative solutions (Basham, 2012; Pounder, 2001).

These findings provide a comprehensive picture of the relationship between educational commodification and transactional leadership, as well as the impact, drivers and resistance efforts. to the phenomenon. However, it should be noted that most of the studies analyzed are from developed countries, so further research is needed to understand the context of education commodification in developing countries, including Indonesia

Transactional leadership is still quite common and can be found in many educational institutions. Education leaders often use this approach to manage teaching and administrative staff. They set clear targets, such as student graduation rates, standardized test scores, or the number of academic publications, and provide rewards or consequences based on the achievement of those targets.

In an era of increased educational accountability, transactional leadership is often used to meet standards set by governments or accreditation bodies. This can be seen in the form of performance-based teacher or lecturer evaluations or university funding based on certain metrics. Transactional leadership tends to be effective in managing the administrative aspects of educational institutions. This includes scheduling, resource allocation, and compliance with policies and procedures.

CONCLUSION

This study has conducted a systematic literature review to explore the relationship between higher education commodification and transactional leadership. Based on the analysis of 37 relevant studies, it can be concluded that there is a close relationship between the two phenomena.

The findings suggest that transactional leadership, with its emphasis on the exchange relationship between leaders and subordinates, tends to encourage a financial gain-oriented management approach. In the context of higher education, this can lead to commodification, where education is treated as a product that must be sold competitively to students as consumers.

The commodification of higher education is known to have a number of negative impacts, such as overemphasis on commercial aspects, exploitation of the academic workforce, decline in the quality of learning, and loss of public accountability and the primary mission of education. Factors such as the adoption of business management principles, financial pressures, the influence of neoliberalism ideology, and labor market demands contribute to commodification.

However, there are resistance efforts from academics who oppose the practice of commodification and seek alternative solutions, such as the application of transformational leadership models or leadership oriented towards academic values.

The findings of this systematic literature review highlight the importance of examining the impact of transactional leadership styles on the direction and values of higher education. Educational institutions need to maintain a balance between managerial and financial aspects and the main mission of education, such as intellectual development, character building, and the search for scientific truth.

Further research is needed to understand the context of education commodification and transactional leadership in developing countries, including Indonesia, and to explore strategies and best practices to prevent the negative impacts of these phenomena.

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