Impact of Leadership Styles and Employee Training on the Performance of Graduates Joining the Real Estate Industry

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ABSTRACT

The recent shift in the real estate industry worldwide and changing norms at the workplace, coupled with globalization and the emergence of new technology demand highly skilled employees. The industry today is concerned about tapping qualified and skilled employees, who would be able to adapt according to the needs of the working environment. The need for understanding the theory with an application bent of mind and subsequently customize commensurate with the needs of the real estate industry, happens to be the major handicap for all prospective job seekers and entrepreneurs alike. Does that have anything to do with the lecturers’ inability to align their teaching-learning processes and techniques with the precise requirements of the real estate industry, culminating in the present state of affairs? It has also been proved that the absence of effective leadership style, that can decipher the needs of the real estate sector happens to be the major handicap for all prospective job seekers and entrepreneurs alike. This unsatisfactory performance in terms of the alumnus graduating from the institution, without the requirements of the construction industry. This research aims to examine employees’ performance and their leaders, which play a key role in producing high quality graduates for the industry with regard to the training experience of the facilitator, i.e. the lecturers.

INTRODUCTION

Oman during the past two decades has witnessed massive changes in terms of industrial growth and development. Oman is boosting its downstream industrial capacity by expanding the petrochemicals sector and providing the fuel stocks needed to power other industries [1]. This has led to the boom in the infrastructure sector in turn impacting the real estate sector. The wise and astute leadership and vision of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos has leapfrogged Oman to become a modern day developing country, with modern infrastructure and amenities attracting global and domestic investors [2]. These rapid changes in Oman’s economy brought to the fore opportunities as well as challenges to the real estate industry as they require different types of qualified and skilled employees, who would be able to adapt according to the needs of the working environment. The need for understanding the theory with an application bent of mind and subsequently customize commensurate with the needs of the real estate industry, happens to be the major handicap for all prospective job seekers and entrepreneurs alike. This unsatisfactory output in terms of the alumnus graduating from the institution, without the requirements of the construction industry. This research aims to examine employees’ performance and their leaders, which play a key role in producing high quality graduates for the industry with regard to the training experience of the facilitator, i.e. the lecturers.

Review of the Literature:

The rapid expansion made by the Sultanate of Oman under the wise leadership of His Majesty, Sultan Qaboos Bin Said in the last forty plus years have necessitated the need for an exponential growth of employable and entrepreneurial graduates who can carry the momentum forward [4]. Furthermore, The current environment is accompanied by a world shortage of skilled, competent and committed employees. According to [5], a country that is incapable of developing the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them efficiently in the national economy will certainly be unable to develop anything else. Skillful leaders are clear indicators for successful organizations. It is therefore pertinent to understand the cause of this gap existing in the real estate
sector and provide interventions that can, not only plug in the loophole existing in that sector, but also provide customizable solutions even to other sectors employing the graduates of the Colleges of Technology. In Oman HE the need for innovative leaders cannot be denied as the effective leader should posses the style of today and expected to be transformational to increase performance. Moreover, transformational leadership can provide the much needed solutions to the challenges being faced by the institution in nurturing employable graduates for the real estate sector by altering the regulations, aligning the teaching-learning environment with the industry requisite apart from providing opportunities of growth for the staff members and the students alike. The global challenge is also being replicated in the gulf countries as most of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including the Sultanate of Oman is struggling to provide with equipped real estate industry oriented manpower precisely in line with the requirements of the job market, including that of the private as well as the public sector. There has often been criticism in the GCC that productivity of the workforce is not up to international standards [6], that can be attributed to various factors. The Government statistics data have indicated that the private sector in Oman is growing, and there has been an increase in its products and services; therefore, the demand for well qualified new graduates is also increasing in the private sector. The growth is close to 50% compared to the year 2006 figures [7]. To date, when companies have submitted their needs to the Ministry of Manpower, skilled resources have proven to be a challenge to source within the Omani populace, for many jobs in companies, especially the new ones. One of the major points of criticism raised by the corporate sector is that fresh graduates are not job-ready. Openings like civil engineers, architects, design engineers, foreman, project engineers and shift supervisors are coming to the fore and need well qualified professionals for and implementing the emerging technologies for completing the projects on time.

The role of leadership in the higher education section has become increasingly essential to meet today’s different challenges and to restructure the institutions to play their role in advancing national development. Clearly, in order to achieve goals and meet today’s challenges, effective leadership is important in society, companies or higher education. Leaders introduce the required changes in their organisations to build their nations through their visions so that they contribute to the development of the policies of their countries. Moreover, faculty awareness pertaining to the skill requirements and work experiences for the real estate sector is an essential prerequisite. Both [8] and [9] concurred that a university’s main responsibility is to provide the required knowledge and skills through faculty members and different programmes to produce qualified and competent graduates especially in the developing countries. Universities’ principals are under pressure to respond to the market demands and to provide skilled, qualified graduates to solve the social and economic problems within their societies that has a similarity with the problem identified as part of the study. One of the major challenges facing the decision makers in higher education in Oman is the leadership in line with the demands of the employers, including the real estate sector. The situation in Oman relating to universities is similar to that in many developing countries. The higher education institutions worldwide have faced many challenges in responding to the requirements of the world economy. According to [10], the future development of the economy and human capital is strongly linked to the importance of effective management training and leadership in the educational sector in Oman. So, there is a direct relation between the human capital (graduates) and the training offered by higher education institutions. Therefore, strong technological and personal skills should be possessed by the leaders and employees of the colleges of technology in line with the ones required by the real estate industry. As Oman is undergoing rapid developments, and metamorphosing from petroleum based economy to that of services based one, these colleges have to remain competitive and continuously improve to face the challenges in order to provide competitive graduates, matching the exact requirements of the industry/employer. Researchers around the globe have studied leadership in higher education and established a strong relationship with the student output churned out by the institution semester after semester and year after year [11]. Based on the literature on leadership in Oman, very few studies were carried out concerning industry oriented faculty training in the higher education. A study by [12] indicated that the Omani principals changed their behaviours and thinking about leadership as a result of their participation in the Principal Leadership Training project. Researchers investigated leadership in private higher education institutions in Oman to understand the effectiveness of the current academic leaders in private higher education institutions in Oman. These had a direct bearing on the training of the academic and non-academic staff, finally impacting the graduates joining the industry, including that of the real estate sector. Employee performance is also related to employee training. Employee training plays a vital role in improving performance as well as increasing productivity. Training has been proved to generate performance improvement related benefits for the employee as well as for the organization by positively influencing employee performance through the development of employee knowledge, skills, ability, competencies, and behavior [13].

**Summary:**

Leadership within the higher education sector is an essential pre-requisite to provide the right kind of training to the teaching faculties, apart from building up the necessary teaching-learning environment. It would facilitate in the lecturers working closely with corporate chieftains of the real estate industry of Oman, that in
turn would provide the ideal industry-institute interface for an effective communication loop impacting the student graduate and the industry positively. In order to meet effective employees’ performance and today’s challenges, effective leadership is important in higher education, especially when the results are measured in churning out skilled and employable graduates eligible to join the industry and corporate.

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