

Impact of Responsiveness on Academic Leadership in turbulent times

Author Dr. Rajnish Ratna ¹ , Associate Professor, Gedu College of Business Studies Key words: academic Leadership, responsiveness, interpersonal, turbulent times.	Abstract Educators are experiencing unprece- dented changes in all facets of education including mode of teaching-learning approaches, particularly during the lockdown phase. This obliged the educators to be responsive and take up academic leadership during the turbulent times caused by the pandemic. Thus, this paper will study the impact of responsiveness on academic leadership in turbulent times. This paper will also discuss the difference in responsiveness to the demographic variables of educators.
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Introduction

Educators are experiencing unprecedented changes mainly in curriculum, facilities, infrastructures, teaching-learning policy and decision making, training and development, and technology use, culture and diversity during the lockdown phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. This change called for effective education leadership defined by responsiveness to ensure quality teaching-learning.

Responsiveness in the context of effective leadership is understood as a quality of responding quickly and positively, particularly during turbulent times. In this context, the study by Koopmans et al. (2014) reported a

* The term educators and academic leaders mean teaching faculty in this paper. Therefore, academic leadership means leadership shouldered by teaching faculty to ensure delivery of quality teaching-learning.

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significant positive association between responsiveness and individual work performance. Similarly, Liang, Chang, and Wang (2011) mention that quality of service responsiveness is correlated with social emotions of employees that influence job and customer satisfaction outcome. However, certain preconditions are necessary for academic leaders to respond positively to changes in education. For instance, academic leaders respond positively to changes in educational systems if they are involved in planning and preparing.

It is also important to understand that academic leaders respond to the different educational changes effectively if they have clear educational and professional vision to lead their institution and implement the right change. Further, to respond effectively to change, the academic leaders have to establish direct and open communication channels with students, staff, and parents to communicate and share the vision, aims and programmes of the institution. Academic leaders should also strive to build strong relationships with the local public and private authorities to garner necessary support

In this relation, Gronn, (2000) and Hargreaves & Fink (2006) underscore that academic leaders should be engaged in interactions with all the people in the institution. They conclude that leadership should be shared and distributed. This approach equips teachers with the aptitude to decelerate the pace of the classroom and to support students to take a closer, more detailed analytical view of the problems, concerns, and ideas that they encounter to “extraordinarily re-experience the ordinary” (Shor, 1992, as cited in Williamson & Morgan, 2009).

Therefore, focusing on responsiveness by academic leaders during crisis will create a conducive environment to enhance quality and effectiveness of teaching-learning. Thus, this study will focus on the impact of responsiveness on academic leadership. Specifically, this paper will study the level of responsiveness and academic leadership among faculties during a turbulent and perceptual difference towards responsiveness and academic leadership with respect to gender and programme of respondents.

Literature review

Responsiveness is the quality of reacting quickly and positively. It is a multidisciplinary variable. It is also marked as a competitive capability (Palmer, 2001; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Stalk, 1988; Tsang and Qu,

2000). Organizational responsiveness is an effective tool marketer can use to manage customer relationships (Homburg et al., 2007; Jayachandran and Varadarajan, 2006). Organizational responsiveness is “the ability of firms to quickly respond to changes in their external environment (Hoyt et al., 2007). Customer responsiveness is “the speed of reaction to customer-related change” (Homburg et al., 2007).

Teacher leadership is one of the strategies that can help school leaders respond to and implement the changes (Al-Zyoud, 2015). Asree et al. (2010) indicated that leadership competency and organizational culture have positive relationships with responsiveness. In addition, e-learning opportunities are expanding very fast, and teachers and students must be ready to embrace new and improved technology (Hilliard, 2011).

Past studies have found that leadership practices are directly related to organizational performance (e.g., Castanias and Helfat, 1991; Church, 1995; Coughlan and Harbison, 1998; Fahy, 2000; Heskett et al., 1994; Ozcelik et al., 2008; Prabhu et al., 2002). In addition, there is a significant positive relationship between leadership and responsiveness (in terms of quality, speed and flexibility) (e.g., Crocitto and Youssef, 2003; Crosby, 2002; Jabnoun and Rasasi, 2005).

It uncovered positive relationships between responsiveness and financial and non-financial performances (Chen et al., 2004; Kritchanchai, 2004; Theoharakis and Hooley, 2003).

Based on the above findings, it is observed that leadership is a well-researched topic with different relevant and topical variables in organizational and individual contexts but in relation to responsiveness there is a gap. Furthermore, responsiveness is also researched to financial and non-financial performance, but it is an association with and influences leadership, particularly academic leadership during turbulent times like COVID-19 lockdowns.

Research Method

This study adopts a descriptive and hypothesis-testing research design with students of GCBS as the study population. The study uses purposive and convenient sampling techniques. Data was collected using questioner in

Google form format and appropriate statistical tests are conducted. The study also proposed alternate hypotheses which are as follows:

- i) H1: The level of responsiveness and academic leadership among faculties is above average.
- ii) H2: There is a significant difference in responsiveness and academic leadership among faculties with respect to the gender of respondents.
- iii) H3: There is a significant difference in responsiveness and academic leadership among faculties with respect to the programme of respondents.
- iv) H4: There is a significant impact of responsiveness on academic leadership.
- v) H5: There is a significant impact by dimensions of academic leadership on responsiveness

Data Analysis and interpretations

Sample description

It is important to know the sample composition before proceeding with data analysis. In this study, only two dimensions of respondents which are gender and programme. The sample description is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Sample description with age and programme

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	80	55.9	55.9
Male	63	44.1	100
Total	143	100	
Programme	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
BBA	72	50.3	50.3
B. Com	71	49.7	100
Total	143	100	

[Note: BBA – Bachelor of administration, and B. Com – Bachelor in commerce]

There are 56 % of female and 44 % of male respondents. Almost equal participation from both programmes is taken into consideration – BBA and B. Com (table 1).

Reliability Analysis

This study, uses two variables which are responsiveness and academic leadership. Responsiveness consists of eight dimensions, and academic leadership has four dimensions. The reliability result presents the value of Cronbach’s alpha of all dimensions under respective variables with the

number of items (Table 2). The values of Cronbach's alpha of all dimensions are more than the recommended value of .7 (Cronbach, 1951) which confirms that that instruments used for measuring dimensions and variables are highly reliable.

Table 2
Reliability results

SN.	Variable	Dimensions	No of items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Responsiveness		7	.850
1a		Timeliness	3	.730
1b		Positivity	4	.774
2	Academic Leadership		12	.933
2a		Technical Competency	4	.837
2b		Interpersonal Competency	4	.828
2c		Strategic competency	4	.824

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis was conducted to study the level of responsiveness, academic leadership and dimensions of academic leadership among GCBS faculties.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics of items of responsiveness

Items of Responsiveness	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Faculties expressed love and care to students with their eyes and face in key moments.	143	1.00	5.00	3.559	1.011
Faculties expressed love and care towards students in words	143	1.00	5.00	3.650	.980
Faculties created moments of warmth and connection with students.	143	1.00	5.00	3.657	1.004
Faculties engaged in compassionate actions towards students when they were in need.	143	1.00	5.00	3.713	.885
Faculties showed concern for students when they were struggling.	143	1.00	5.00	3.832	1.013
Faculties supported students when they needed it.	143	1.00	5.00	3.888	1.088
Faculties shared their feeling to motivate students when they were low in spirit	143	1.00	5.00	3.902	.959

The analysis shows that the mean of all the seven responsiveness items is more than 3.5 on a scale of 5. The highest mean is reported for '*Faculties shared their feeling to motivate students when they are low in spirit*' followed by '*Faculties supported students when they needed it*' and '*Faculties showed concern for students when they were struggling*'. On the contrary, the lowest mean is reported for '*Faculties expressed love and care to students with eyes and face in key moments*'.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics of items of technical competency

Technical Competency	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Faculties maintained quality standards of academic performance	143	1.00	5.00	3.797	.931
Faculties ensured programmes objective successfully during COVID-19 times	143	1.00	5.00	3.825	.936
Faculties demonstrated a high level of deliberation	143	1.00	5.00	3.825	1.001
Faculties accomplished module objectives efficiently	143	1.00	5.00	4.028	.813

The means of all four items of technical competence (Table 4) are more than 3.5 on a scale of 5. The highest mean is noted for '*Faculties accomplished module objective efficiently*' followed by '*Faculties demonstrated a high level of competence*' and '*Faculties ensured programmes objective successfully during covid times*'. On the other hand, the lowest mean is reported for '*Faculties maintained quality standards of academic performance.*'

Table 5

Descriptive statistics of items of interpersonal competency

Interpersonal competency	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Faculties assured a high level of trust in understanding	143	1.00	5.00	3.692	.994
Faculties developed positive, open and pleasant emotions and feelings in the relationship	143	1.00	5.00	3.748	.967
Faculties practised a style of resolute communication	143	1.00	5.00	3.825	.906
Faculties maintained positive and true relationships	143	2.00	5.00	3.937	.857

The means of all four items of technical competence (Table 5) are more than 3.5 on a scale of 5. The highest mean is reported for *'Faculties maintained positive and true relationships'* followed by *'Faculties practiced a style of resolute communication'* and *'Faculties developed positive, open and pleasant emotions and feelings in the relationship'*. On the contrary, the lowest mean is reported for *'Faculties assured a high level of trust in understanding'*.

Table 6

Descriptive statistics of items of strategic competency

Strategic competency	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Faculties used power and information intelligently	143	1.00	5.00	3.783	.927
Faculties made effective and timely decisions	143	1.00	5.00	3.825	.898
Intelligently took decisions considering students as human beings	143	1.00	5.00	3.881	.907
Faculties conceptualized situations and designed continuous assessment	143	1.00	5.00	3.902	.858

The means of all four items of technical competence (Table 6) are more than 3.5 on a scale of 5. The highest mean is noted for *'Faculties conceptualized situations and designed continuous assessment'* followed by *'Intelligently took decisions considering students as human beings'* and *'Faculties made effective and timely decisions'*. On the other hand, the lowest mean is reported for *'Faculties used power and information intelligently'*.

Comparative Analysis

One sample t-test conducted with a test value of 3.5 statistics is presented in table 7, and the sample t-test result is presented in table 8.

Table 7

Sample statistics of responsiveness and academic leadership

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Responsiveness	143	3.743	.719	.060
Technical Competency	143	3.868	.783	.065
Interpersonal Competency	143	3.800	.757	.063
Strategic Competency	143	3.847	.726	.060
Academic Leadership	143	3.839	.696	.058

Faculty reported higher mean for academic leadership than responsiveness. Technical competency was reported highest among the three dimensions of academic leadership, followed by strategic and then interpersonal.

Table 8

One sample t-test results

Variable	Test Value = 3.5					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Responsiveness	4.043	142	.000	.24326	.1243	.3622
Technical Competency	5.632	142	.000	.36888	.2394	.4984
Interpersonal Competency	4.744	142	.000	.30070	.1754	.4260
Strategic Competency	5.724	142	.000	.34790	.2278	.4680
Academic Leadership	5.821	142	.000	.33916	.2240	.4543

Since the value of p is less than .05, it means that responsiveness, academic leadership, technical, interpersonal and strategic competency are above the average value among CBGS students. Thereby, the proposed alternate hypothesis H_1 is accepted.

Comparative study of responsiveness and academic leadership with demographic variables – gender and programme

An Independent sample t-test is used for analyzing perceptual differences in responsiveness and leadership with respect to the gender of the respondent. Results are presented in Tables 9 and 10.

Table 9

Group statistics with gender

Gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Responsiveness	Female	80	3.764	.687	.0769
	Male	62	3.709	.766	.0973
Academic leadership	Female	80	3.836	.636	.0711
	Male	63	3.842	.771	.0972

Higher responsiveness is reported by female respondents than male. On the other hand, slightly higher academic leadership is reported by male respondents than female.

Table 10

Sample t-test results

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Responsiveness	Equal variances assumed	1.190	.277	.446	140	.656	.05461	.12237
	Equal variances not assumed			.440	123.716	.661	.05461	.12406
Academic leadership	Equal variances assumed	.774	.380	-.052	141	.959	-.00613	.11778
	Equal variances not assumed			-.051	119.366	.959	-.00613	.12049

In case of responsiveness, female respondents ($M=3.76$, $SD = .687$) did not differ significantly than male respondents ($M=3.70$, $SD=.766$), $t(1) = .446$, $p = n.s.$ In academic leadership, female respondents ($M=3.83$, $SD = .636$) did not differ significantly than male respondents ($M=3.84$, $SD=.771$), $t(1) = .446$, $p = n.s.$ The value of p which is more than $.05$ for both variables indicate that there is no significant difference between male and female respondents. It is inferred that both genders perceive responsiveness and academic leadership equally. Thus, the proposed alternate hypothesis H_3 is rejected, and the null is accepted.

Table 11

Group statistics with programme

Programme		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Responsiveness	BBA	71	3.680	.733	.087
	B. Com	71	3.800	.708	.084
Academic leadership	BBA	72	3.806	.697	.082
	B. Com	71	3.872	.699	.083

B. Com students report higher responsiveness and academic leadership than BBA students.

Table 12

Sample t-test results

Programme		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Responsiveness	Equal variances assumed	.083	.774	-.997	140	.320	-.12072	.12104
	Equal variances not assumed			-.997	139.826	.320	-.12072	.12104
Academic Leadership	Equal variances assumed	.214	.645	-.559	141	.577	-.06535	.11682
	Equal variances not assumed			-.559	140.960	.577	-.06535	.11682

In case of responsiveness, respondents from BBA ($M=3.68$, $SD = .733$) did not differ significantly than respondents from B. Com ($M=3.80$, $SD=.70$), $t(1) = .997$, $p = n.s.$ In academic leadership, respondents from BBA ($M=3.80$, $SD = .697$) did not differ significantly than male respondents ($M=3.87$, $SD=.699$), $t(1) = .645$, $p = n.s.$ The value of p which is more than $.05$ for both variables indicate that there is no significant difference between the respondents of the two programmes. It is inferred that responsiveness and academic leadership are perceived equally by students of both the programmes. Thereby, the proposed alternate hypothesis H_4 is rejected, and the null is accepted.

Regression analysis

Regression analysis is conducted to study the impact of responsiveness on academic leadership.

Table 13

Model summary of responsiveness and academic leadership

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.762 ^a	.581	.578	.45406
a. Predictors: (Constant), responsiveness				

The analysis of the impact of responsiveness on academic leadership show that the value of r is .762, and *adjusted r square* is .578. It is reported that responsiveness explains 57.8 % of the variance ($R^2=.581$, $F(1,140) = 194.350$, $p<.01$). It is inferred that the remaining 43.2 % is unexplained and attributed to other variables.

Table 14

ANOVA results of responsiveness and academic leadership

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	40.069	1	40.069	194.350	.000 ^b
	Residual	28.864	140	.206		
	Total	68.934	141			
a. Dependent Variable: Academic Leadership						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Responsiveness						

Grounded in the ANOVA results of responsiveness on academic leadership, it is inferred that responsiveness is a significant predictor of academic leadership.

Table 15

Coefficient results of responsiveness and academic leadership

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.074	.202		5.316	.000
	Responsiveness	.739	.053	.762	13.941	.000
a. Dependent Variable: AL						

The coefficient results of responsiveness and academic leadership show that responsiveness has a significant positive and high ($\beta = .762$, $p<.01$) impact on academic leadership.

Table 16

Model summary of dimensions of academic leadership on responsiveness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.771 ^a	.594	.585	.46448
a. Predictors: (Constant), SC, TC, IC				

The analysis of the impact of academic leadership on responsiveness show that the value of r is .594, and *adjusted r square* is .585. It is reported that

dimensions of academic leadership explain 58.5% of the variance ($R^2=.594$, $F(3,138) = 67.3$, $p<.01$). It is inferred that the remaining 41.5% is unexplained and attributed to other variables.

Table 17

ANOVA results of dimensions of academic leadership on responsiveness

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	43.559	3	14.520	67.300	.000 ^b
	Residual	29.773	138	.216		
	Total	73.331	141			
a. Dependent Variable: Responsiveness						
b. Predictors: (Constant), SC, TC, IC						

Grounded in the ANOVA results of academic leadership on responsiveness, it is inferred that dimensions of academic leadership are significant predictors of responsiveness.

Table 18

Coefficient results of dimensions of academic leadership on responsiveness

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.771	.220		3.512	.001
	TC	.243	.081	.265	3.017	.003
	IC	.452	.101	.476	4.488	.000
	SC	.081	.099	.082	.817	.415
a. Dependent Variable: Responsiveness						

The coefficient results of dimensions of academic leadership on responsiveness show that technical competency of academic leadership has significant positive and low ($\beta = .265$, $p<.01$) impact on responsiveness; and interpersonal competency of academic leadership is having significant positive and moderate ($\beta = .476$, $p<.01$) impact on responsiveness. At the same time, strategic competency has no significant impact on responsiveness. It is also inferred that interpersonal competency has more impact on responsiveness. Thus, the proposed alternate hypothesis H5 is partially accepted.

Conclusion and recommendation

Academic leadership is evaluated in terms of three dimensions – technical, interpersonal and strategic. Responsiveness has two dimensions – timeliness and positivity, and academic leadership has three dimensions – technical, interpersonal and strategic. Timeliness refers to responding to the need of students immediately as and when required, and positivity talks about responding and extending support positively. Technical competence is evaluated in terms of achieving programme objectives successfully, accomplishing module objectives efficiently, maintaining quality standards of academic performance and demonstrating a high level of deliberation. Interpersonal competence is evaluated in terms of maintaining positive and true relationships, developing open and pleasant emotions and feelings in the relationship, assuring a high level of trust in understanding, and practising a style of resolute communication. Strategic competence is evaluated by taking effective and timely decisions, conceptualizing situations and designing continuous assessments, using power and information intelligently, and taking decisions considering students as human beings. In case of the analysis results, it is concluded that the level of responsiveness and academic leadership with all three dimensions are above average during the covid lockdown phase. There is no significant difference in the perception of males and females towards responsiveness and academic leadership of faculties. There is no significant difference in the perception of BBA and B. Com students towards responsiveness and academic leadership of faculties. It is also concluded that the level of responsiveness and leadership was uniform. It is concluded from the regression results that increasing responsiveness would improve academic leadership while improving academic leadership will also augment responsiveness, except for strategic competency.

It is recommended that the college management committee should create awareness about responsiveness and academic leadership in education. It is also suggested to provide training programmes related to responsive behaviour and academic leadership for better performance, so that it can be used aptly in normal as well as in changed conditions even in turbulent times like lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Limitations and future scope

This study is limited to only one college with two programmes and final year students for two variables. There are opportunities to conduct similar research with more participants from diverse programmes and inclusion of topical variables.

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