

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AT STRATEGY FIRST UNIVERSITY, YANGON, MYANMAR

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**Abstract:** This study examines the relationship between lecturers' perceptions of leadership capacity and organizational culture at Strategy First University, Yangon, Myanmar, in the 2020 academic year. A total number of 70 lecturers who were currently teaching Undergraduate and Professional development degrees at the university were surveyed.

The researcher conducted the study using High Leadership School Survey (HLCSS) by Lambert (2003) and Organizational Culture Survey adopted from Denison (1990). The collected data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to determine the relationship between the two variables. The study showed a moderate relationship between lecturers' perceptions of their leadership capacity and organizational culture,  $r(68) = .47$ ,  $p = .000$  according to APA standards. The lecturers' leadership capacity could be enhanced by participation in teamwork, communication with each other, involvement in decision-making processes, and cooperation with stakeholders to strengthen their leadership capacity. It was recommended that lecturers spend more time on participation, collaborative work, and reflection for their professional development. The administrators should practice shared leadership and arrange organizational learning for lecturers to assess their practices and make required changes in line with the changing educational environment.

**Keywords:** Lecturers, Perceptions, Leadership Capacity, Organizational Culture

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## **Introduction**

Education 4.0 is the learning strategy and is associated with the new fourth industrial revolution. Universities must match their teaching and procedures with technical developments to train future students for the job. Leaders are raised by having a large number of responsibilities both inside and outside their respective institutions, whether they are running public or private profit organizations (Martin & Samels, 2004). Instead of relying on one leader's work in establishing a concrete organizational culture, the engagement of both leaders and members is essential in great transformation needs. Therefore, reinforcing leadership capacity for lecturers contributes to organizational performance and raises the number of leaders to affect positive organizational culture (Turan & Bektas, 2013).

Every educational organization should consider lifelong learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century based on four basic educational visions, "learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, learning to be," for the development of humans' culture dedicated to discussion and intellectualization. Instructors are considered designers, initiators, and leaders for changing education and students' learning development to become productive people. Leadership capacity can be understood as an association's ability to continue the endeavors of the entire organization together with administrators, instructors, parents and community contributors, and the understudies, according to Lambert (2003). According to Fullan (2011), establishing instructors' management capability is the foundation for collective leadership obligation, especially during the duration of organizational reform.

All aspects of schools and colleges are formed and affected by cultural styles Fullan (2011); as a result, culture should be assumed as a critical factor in the organization as well as the outgrowth of leadership (Schein, 2010). Organizational culture is viewed as methods, principles, and expectations related to the staff's job that instruct subordinates in learning what they should do. Administrators should appreciate an organization's strong collective behavior, values, and convictions established as a strong corporate culture to maintain a healthy culture of an organization (Tsai, 2011).

Fink and Resnick (2001) proved that the principals, instructors, and school community were mindful of keeping up and setting up the culture of instructing and learning inside their schools. Students' achievement is one of the components of school culture (Fullan & Hargraves, 1996; Heskett & Kotter, 1992; Purinton, 2012). Leaders of schools often begin to have a culture that creates success for the students and is at the center of change for the ethos of their community. Healthy organizational culture is shaped by its leadership

capacity. Establishing a healthy organizational culture based on a collaborative effort to enhance the organization may be aided by a single, shared purpose among administrators and instructors (Marzano et al., 2005). Thus, administrators and instructors must prioritize culture in the school and recognize that it is a result of leadership (Schein, 2010)

Most of Myanmar's private universities operate jointly with institutions abroad in different educational fields and are internationally accredited. There was a need for developing lecturers' leadership capacity at University to improve their professional knowledge and skills and update their instructional methods with technological innovation to adapt to the international challenges and overall University performance. Moreover, the researcher wanted to study the effect of organizational culture on the improvement of the leadership capacity of lecturers. Organizational culture is an organization's long-standing beliefs and values, as well as employees' beliefs and expected values of their job, which impact their attitudes and behavior. Thus, linking instructors' leadership capacity and organizational culture is essential. They are important factors for everyone who is involved or related to any educational organization is advantaged to foster the overall achievement of education.

On top of that, effective instructors' leadership and positive organizational cultures affect continuous improvement in professional practice and achieving student outcomes. This study was related to how the institution builds lecturers' leadership capacity and how administrators or leaders shape the cultural aspects to develop capacity-building efforts. As a result, administrators and lecturers learned their leadership capacity and organizational culture better at Strategy First University. Therefore, this study was conducted to improve lecturers' leadership capacity and create a positive organizational culture development to overcome the challenges the lecturers and the University faced.

### **Research Objectives:**

The three research objectives were addressed in this study.

1. To identify lecturers' perceptions of their leadership capacity at Strategy First University, Yangon, Myanmar.
2. To determine lecturers' perceptions towards organizational culture at Strategy First University, Yangon, Myanmar.
3. To determine the relationship between lecturers' perceptions towards leadership capacity and organizational culture at Strategy First University, Yangon, Myanmar.

## **Literature Review**

Leadership qualities in all organizations are finding innovative ways with risk-taking, modeling the way, encouraging a shared vision, and empowering others (Kouzes & Posner, 2008). Successful leadership growth is key to achievement in all areas of higher education (Bensimon & Neumann, 1992; Collins, 2001). Leaders in organizations, whether established or new, have an impact on the culture of learning and the dedication to continuous professional development (Giancola & Hutchinson, 2005; Harris, 2011). Every organization has a culture, and it is common for leaders to be responsible for cultural transformations. According to DuFour et al. (2008), significant, productive, and long-term change can only be achieved if it is embedded in the organizational culture.

## **Developing Leadership Capacity of Instructors**

A reflective attitude with realistic and situational teaching knowledge is important to encourage work among instructors to improve their understanding of the practice. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) suggested that instructors should not theorize their everyday attempts in the classroom and social interaction, instructors' thoughts should be correlated more with certainty, and instructors should address challenges and understand inquiry-based learning. In turn, technological skills are required for instructors to develop communication and curriculum to network with students and colleagues (Crowther et al., 2002).

Gray and Bishop (2009) defined instructor leadership capacity as an opportunity for instructors to solve problems through observation and active participation. The willingness of the administrators to inspire teaching and learning and delegate leadership to lecturers fosters the environment for collective learning and improved success for learners (Lambert 2003). Further, sharing leadership with lecturers can result in better university campus culture where lecturers are encouraged to build their independent leadership capacity (DuFour & Fullan, 2013; Wilhelm, 2013).

Instructors play various roles in providing the achievement of university and students, such as university leaders, mentors, instructional and curriculum specialists, change agents, and learners for life-long according to Harrison & Killion (2007). An instructor's most significant thing in their leadership role is companionship (Donaldson, 2001). Also, instructor leaders use supportive learning activities to promote the shared tradition of exchanging information, abilities, and expertise while encouraging the mutual learning processes among school group members.

## **Organizational Culture**

In developing instructors' leadership capability, organizational culture may either be a hindrance or a catalyst (Mullen & Jones, 2008). According to organizational change agents, leaders have an impact on culture, whether in the workplace or on a university campus. Fullan (2001) found a link between administrators and the university's culture. For all staff members, students, administrators, and instructors, culture is the university's center, and administrators are accountable for whether or not the culture is beneficial (Fullan, 2014). While leaders play a role in shaping organizational culture, organizational culture also shapes the staff (DuFour et al., 2008).

According to Kuh and Whitt (2000), the culture within higher education is a collective, mutually forming a pattern of norms, principles, activities, and beliefs that direct individual and group behaviors, offering a reference structure for campus acts. The college and university environment will be decided by its culture through mission, teamwork, tactics, socialization, and leadership (Tierney, 1988).

## **The Relationship Between Organizational Culture and Leadership Capacity**

An organization's culture is derived from its leadership which helps to create a successful working atmosphere. When leaders grasp this thought, they can shape the way of life to one that cultivates, propels, energizes, and moves (Alvesson, 2011).

The individual convictions and qualities drive the culture shared among individuals, and pioneers who show a degree of emotional intelligence are the essential figures in an association (Ilyas and Abdullah, 2016). Leaders who can organize with the people in their association will be better prepared to form and characterize the association's culture and impact the individual's mission.

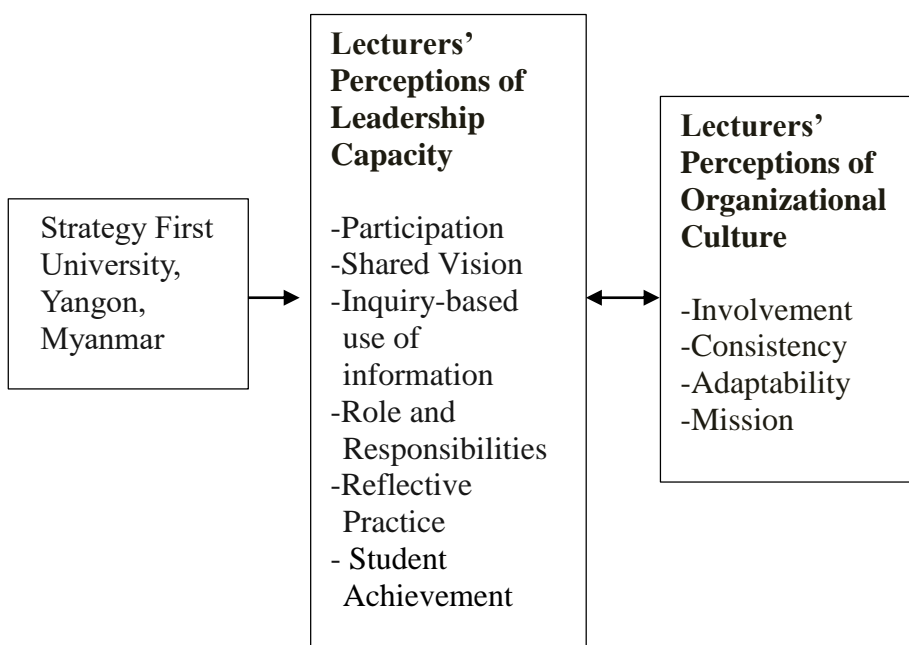
Sergiovanni and Corbally (1986) noted, "Leadership and its organizational context are inseparable, and thus it is difficult to understand one without the other." A leader's success in setting goals and vision depends on how leaders understand the culture. Leadership in University means seeing an institution and its constituents from different perspectives (Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2013). Therefore, understanding organizational culture and leadership knowledge is required for leaders to understand their institutions better and move organizations forward (Tierney, 2008).

Wong (2006) mentioned that human resources are the most significant resources in the educational sector. The ideal approach to assembling a positive culture is to keep up collaboration in which individual aptitudes are esteemed and development is consistent.

The ability of leaders in organizations to handle important attributes essential for an organization's goals and priorities determines an organizations' success (Olughor, 2014).

### Methodology

This chapter represents the Research Design, Research Instrument, Study Population, Data Collection, and Analysis.



**Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework of This Study**

The study aimed to identify the relationship between lecturers' perception towards their leadership capacity and organizational culture at Strategy First University, Yangon, Myanmar. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this study. The framework shows the lecturers' leadership capacity using leadership capacity questionnaires developed by Lambert (2003). The right side shows lecturers' perception of organizational culture and its variables such as involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission based on organizational culture questionnaires designed by Dennison (1990). The

researcher believed it was significant to find out how lecturers perceived each variable according to the conceptual framework in this study.

### **Research Instruments**

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship of teachers' perception towards leadership capacity and organizational culture at Strategy First University, Yangon, Myanmar.

The study was a quantitative correlational study. The survey questionnaires were based on Leadership Capacity School Survey by Lambert (2003) and Denison's Organizational Culture Survey (1990).

The question was divided into three parts: Part (I) questionnaire including demographic profiles of lecturers' gender, age, educational qualification, and working experience. Part (II) questionnaires were about lecturers' perceptions of leadership capacity containing 30 questions, and Part(III) was about lecturers' perceptions of organizational culture containing 26 questions. The researcher used descriptive statistics for data interpretation and Pearson Product Moment correlation( $r$ ) to determine the relationship between the two variables.

### **Population and Sample**

The study population was 70 participants who were currently teaching Undergraduate students (30) and students who were taking Post graduate diplomas students (40), and they were investigated with an online survey. All respondents returned the questionnaires and achieved a response rate of 100%.

### **Findings**

The findings of this study were based on three research objectives.

#### **Research Objective One**

Table (1) summarizes the sum of the mean and standard deviation of lecturers' perceptions of their leadership capacity at Strategy First University, Yangon, Myanmar. The finding of the total mean score result was 3.54, interpreted as *High*, indicating the level of lecturers' perceptions towards their leadership capacity was high. Construct 2, with a mean score (3.81), *Shared Vision*, was the highest level in the table, whereas construct 5, *Reflective Practice*, got (3.35), the lowest mean score among the six constructs. The highest mean score in shared vision indicated that lecturers perceived this as important in students' learning, decision making, and professional development. The lowest mean score in reflective practice resulted in lecturers' perceptions in this area being the least important.

Table 1. *The Summary of Means and Standard Deviations of lecturers' Perceptions Towards Leadership Capacity (n=70)*

No.	Leadership Capacity	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	Participation	3.38	.956	Moderate
2.	Shared Vision	3.81	.814	High
3.	Inquiry-based Use of Information	3.65	.862	High
4.	Role and Responsibility	3.53	.889	High
5.	Reflective Practice	3.35	1.015	Moderate
6.	Student Achievement	3.55	.959	High
	Total	3.54	.916	High

### Research Objective Two

Table (2) presents the total mean of lecturers' perceptions of organizational culture (3.99), which had been interpreted as High due to the range of 3.51-4.50 according to data interpretation standards. It was recognized that the area of the *mission* was the highest mean score (4.14), and lecturers' perceptions in this area were important. The lowest mean score in *Consistency* was 3.85, indicating that lecturers did not perceive this factor as important for developing organizational culture.

Table 2. *The Summary of the Total Mean and Standard Deviations Score of lecturers' Perceptions Towards Organizational Culture (n=70)*

No.	Organizational Culture	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	Mission	4.12	.572	High
2.	Adaptability	4.14	.676	High
3.	Involvement	3.86	.591	High
4.	Consistency	3.85	.606	High
	Total	3.99	.611	High

### Research Objective Three

Table 3 shows the result of the levels of Lecturers' perceptions towards their leadership capacity and organizational culture with Pearson Correlation. The significant value of the result finding was 0.01, which was smaller than .05. Therefore, the researcher concluded a significant relationship between lecturers' perception of their leadership capacity and organization culture at Strategy First University, Yangon, Myanmar. The researcher accepted the research hypothesis and rejected the null hypothesis in this study. There was a moderate relationship between the two selected variables because the correlation(r)value was .468.



Table 3. *Pearson Correlation between the Level of Teachers' Perceptions Towards Leadership Capacity and Organizational Culture (n=70)*

		Leadership Capacity	Conclusion
Lecturers' Perceptions of their Leadership Capacity and Organizational Culture	Pearson Correlation	.468*	There is a significant relationship between the two variables
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed).

### Discussion

#### *1. The Lecturers' Perceptions of their Leadership Capacity at Strategy First University, Yangon, Myanmar*

It could be stated that lecturers know the vision very well in the university setting, and they have a good information system using the data and practicing well their leadership capacity to focus on student learning and teaching practices in this university. Lambert (1998) stated that a shared vision is a path to unify and consolidate power that has clear, consistent guidance for all organization members to accomplish goals collaboratively.

It is still needed to emphasize two areas under construct 3. According to Harris & Lambert (2003:32-3), collaborative inquiry requires informed conversations, inquiry, reflection, and awareness building which takes time. Therefore, it is needed to plan for the University to develop shared time for discussion and reflective practice. Mansour (2011) suggested from his findings that building a learning cycle and inquiry culture supports instructors with essential knowledge and skills required to develop their sharing decisions and practices. The previous researcher, Henrique (2018), studied the relationship between teachers' perceptions of leadership capacity and their professional competence at the Secondary School of 1912 Dom Boaventura Sama, District of Manufahi in Timor-Leste. The researcher suggested improving in some areas of leadership capacity. All teachers in the school mostly emphasized students' achievement and didn't understand leadership capacity well from the perspective of leaders or educators, especially in collaborative and collective responsibility.

Regarding students' achievement, lecturers' instructional programs were good, and they had a well-supported system for giving feedback to students. But, lecturers needed to explore how to work and communicate with the organization's members to strengthen their leadership capacity and professional development. Penlington et al. (2008) claimed in the study that

two aspects essential in lecturers' leadership capacity and teaching development are improvement in sustainable student outcomes and assisting in developing members' careers, efficacy, and commitment, leadership skills.

Related to roles and responsibilities, lecturers also still need to enhance their collaborative performance outside the organization and plans for decision-making. Lambert (2003) asserted that collaboration and role extension contribute to a mutual obligation for the entire education profession. Each person works collaboratively through outside networks of the organization, and the greater area of responsibility becomes. Kujur (2016), who conducted the same survey in the Marianists Schools, India, stated that it was still needed to pay attention to collaborative roles and responsibilities. The researcher also assumed instructors paid to focus on students' achievement rather than the thought of leadership view.

Besides, lecturers still spend less on participation in shared works and joining network areas to develop leadership capacity. It showed that the lecturers and stakeholders needed to work collaboratively, taking different roles and responsibilities according to their age and educational levels, and make proper decisions together. Blase and Blase (2001) stated instructors could also engage in the organization and classroom decisions with their professional and thoughtful deliberations regarding participation. Lambert (2002) claimed that team productivity is increased by collaboration and participation. Some reasons might cause the lowest score in this construct 1. It might be lecturers' age differences and educational levels in order to adapt to the international challenges and programs.

Therefore, the president and administrators should support the lecturer's roles in participatory leadership and decision-making processes with the engagement of their knowledge and skills according to the findings in this area. Zaw (2019), the previous researcher, conducted the same study on teachers' perceptions of their leadership capacity and organizational culture at BEH S (1&2) in Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State, Myanmar. Among six constructs the researcher discussed, *participation* was needed to focus more. The researcher also viewed it could be differences in age gaps, educational levels, working experience, and cultural influences that make differences in the participation of teachers in certain programs and current changes in grades.

## *2. The Lecturers' Perceptions Towards Organizational Culture at Strategy First University, Yangon, Myanmar*

Research findings show lecturers' perceptions of organizational culture were relatively good. This could be because of some factors, lecturers' teaching

performance reflects the Mission of the University, the faculty values the University's improvement, administrators in this university trust the professional judgments of lecturers, and lecturers have opportunities for planning across grades and subjects. However, lecturers need to give appreciation and adapt in other areas, such as seeking ideas from outside the university, involvement in the decision-making process, and time to observe each other teaching.

To discuss in-depth, lecturers felt low opinions in observing each other in teaching and working together to evaluate programs and projects in terms of *Consistency*. Communication and Coordination are fundamental in strengthening organizational culture (Denison,1990). According to Yakoumisi and Theofilides (2012), it is pointed out that if the university influences collaborative culture, lecturers share the improvement of their skills, continuous learning happens, and organizational efficiency occurs.

It was necessary to emphasize lecturers' exploring ideas in the external situation, such as conducting seminars and workshops on *Adaptability*. Kotter and Heskett (1992) mentioned that adaptive culture is caring for all people and management processes in the hierarchy for making suitable and useful changes. Crosson, Lane, White, & Klus (1996) described that adaptation to unexpected and changing environments makes organizations distinct from the others. Zaw (2019) discussed that organizational culture should be adaptable according to leadership advancement, circumstances, and educational trends. Instructors' satisfaction levels would be high if they increased participation in teamwork and decision-making.

Regarding, *Involvement*, it could be viewed that lecturers are encouraged to share ideas and keep informed on current issues in the university. However, their participation in the decision-making process should be harvested. Suppose there are higher levels of coordination and participation of all members at each level in the organization. In that case, implementation of decisions are committed at a higher level, leading to higher organizational performance(Denison,1990). Simms (2016) examined the Relationship between Principals' Emotional Intelligence and Teachers' Attitudes Toward Personal and Professional Development and School Culture. The study claimed that school leaders should be reflective practice and strong communication with instructors for instructors' professional and personal growth in the working environment. In addition, building a sustainable relationship between administrators and instructors also affects high instructors' performance and a successful learning environment.

Remarkably, lecturers have a strong and clear mission which helps lecturers clarify organizational goals to adapt to changing situational conditions and improve lecturers' performance to implement successful organization. Organizations are successful if they have a strong sense of mission and strategy that identifies corporate strategies and priorities that communicates a vision of how the enterprise will appear in the future (Denison & Mishra 1995).

School culture indicates all stakeholders' achievement (Fullan, 2014). In order to establish a healthy and sustainable organizational culture, an organization needs to have adaptation and change structure and strategies according to the demands of the changing educational environment. Cultural change in higher education is challenging, and it should be paid attention to all stakeholders' values and behavior in both individuals and groups what they apply their efforts to promote change (Kelly, 2010).

### *3. The Relationship Between Lecturers' Perception Towards Leadership Capacity and Organizational Culture at Strategy First University, Yangon, Myanmar*

Lecturers' perceptions of leadership capacity on participation and reflections were still needed to improve properly while their perceptions towards organization culture were good. This study showed that lecturers should spend more on participation, shared work, and joining network areas to attain leadership capacity and University development by working collaboratively. The previous researcher, D' Ambrosio (2005), studied the *Leadership Capacity: Principal and Teacher Perceptions of Lambert's Essential Elements*. The finding showed that principals and staff should visit other schools, engage in others' collective responsibility and leadership practices, and assess their strengths and weaknesses. The researcher also asserted that schools are needed to enhance participation broadly in some activities and staff development, the results of which can be used as an action plan for both principals and teachers for their leadership advancement and collegial responsibility that matches their needs levels. Being open-minded, good at listening, and able to accept others' ideas improve teachers' leadership capacity and lessen their stress.

On the other hand, Harris (2016) surveyed *The relationship between building teacher leadership capacity and campus culture in a suburban East Texas School District*. The finding of the study was a significant relationship between campus culture and leadership capacity. School leaders should consider informal and formal roles relating to belief and commitment and reflect when building teachers' leadership. The finding also mentioned that school administrators should try to hear teachers' voices in terms of formal

and informal conversation and remind themselves to recognize the different leadership desires of teachers according to their teaching experience years. Schools can modify the campus culture by developing leadership capacity building for teachers. Administrators are also the main influencers for developing teacher leadership or positive organizational culture. This current study also found that the president and administrators should support the lecturer's roles based on lecturers' knowledge and skills to be involved in participation and decision-making processes to improve their leadership capacity as well as sustain campus culture.

According to the previous research conducted by Cansoy, Ramazan & Parlar, Hanifi (2017), *Examining the Relationship between School Culture and Teacher Leadership*. It discussed teacher leadership should be developed based on balancing strong and weak different school cultures. Teachers' collaboration was beneficial in developing different types of school cultures. This current study suggested that working collaboration is needed for lecturers and stakeholders to make proper decisions together and develop positive organizational culture.

To conclude, leadership capacity and organizational culture are interrelated, and the role of lecturers' leadership capacity is essential to improve the sustainable and healthy organizational culture. Therefore, according to the current study, if the leadership capacity of the lecturers has been improved, a strong organizational culture has evolved. Encouraging effective lecturers' leadership capacity could be engaged in a strong, sustainable, and healthy culture. Thus, leadership capacity and organizational culture are believed to be inseparable from achieving the organization's competitive sustenance.

### **Recommendations**

The lecturers should get awareness to adapt to new challenges in knowledge-based economies, engage in their representative groups taking both formal roles and informal leadership roles, collaborative practice work and reflective practices to enhance their professional knowledge and leadership skills, improve students' resiliency, and to implement achievement in the University.

As organizational culture is healthy and strong due to the collective growth and responsibility, therefore, it is required for the administrators in the University should arrange organizational learning for lecturers where lecturers take time to observe sharing and learning instructional practices each other and develop plans for the future. The role of the university president is to support leadership roles for instructors and establish a strong organizational culture. Administrators should practice sharing leadership and make strategic

support to lecturers in which good listening and formal and informal communication enhance lecturers' leadership practices.

Future researchers should extend their studies to both public and private higher education institutions to measure and make an evaluation of the lecturers' leadership capacity and organizational culture. Besides, it is also needed to consider the administrators' or campus presidents' perceptions of their leadership capacity and organizational culture.

### **Research Limitations**

The researcher considered there might be a misunderstanding among the respondents on some question items. If the researcher had taken more time for both explanations of questionnaires to participants in detail for their well understanding and response time, the results might be stronger than this.

The researcher was unable to conduct research with bigger sample pools due to time and resource limitations. It is truly hoped that further study will be done on this topic in the future in order to produce the greatest possible supplements.

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