

An Inquiry about Perception of Autonomous Academic and Accountable Leadership on University Governance: A Case of Bangladesh

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Abstract : Institutional autonomy and academic freedom corresponding to accountability are seen as a core concept of university governance. Universities are crucial factors in search of truth for knowledge production and dissemination. Academic leaders are the pivots to progressively influence the university governance. Therefore, in a continuum of debate about autonomy and accountability in the aspect of perception, academic leadership has been studied. Having longstanding acquaintance in the field the researcher has been instrumental to gain lived experiences of the informants in this qualitative study. Case studies are useful to gain an understanding of the complexities of a particular site to preserve a sense of wholeness of the site being investigated. Thus, multiple case study approach has been employed with a sample size of seventy-one. Such large size of informants was interviewed in order to capture a wider range of views that exist in Bangladesh. This qualitative multiple case study has engaged in-depth interviewing method of academic leaders and policy makers of three case universities. Open-ended semi-structured questionnaires are used to have a comprehensive understanding of how the perception of autonomy and accountability of academic leaders has impacted university governance in the context of Bangladesh. The paper has interpreted the voices of the informants and distinguished both the transformational and transactional style of academic leaderships in local university settings against the globally changed higher education demography. The study finds contextual dissimilarity in the perspectives of autonomy and accountability of academic leadership towards university governance. Unaccountability results in losing autonomous power and collapsing academic excellence. Since accountability grows competitiveness and competence, the paper also focuses on how academic leaders abuse the premise of academic loyalty to universities.

Keywords : academic loyalty, accountability, autonomy, leadership, perception, university governance

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