

## Unveiling the Mystery of Innovation in Higher Education Institutions

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**Abstract :** The purpose of this research is to ascertain whether students at HEIs cultivate distributed leadership and higher-level skills to inspire knowledge creation. Critical reflection of extant literature illustrates the need for a culture of innovation in organizational sustainability. New age leadership behaviors harmonize innovation. The leadership self-efficacy construct supports organizational learning. This exploratory study applies the pragmatic paradigm methodology using the survey research method for primary data collection. A questionnaire was distributed to a sample of university students based in the Southern Anatolian region of Turkey, from both under and postgraduate Business degree programs. An analysis of the findings reveals a greater connection in influencing behavior relying more on the task-centered perspective rather than with the people perspective. These results reveal the need for HEIs to instill a humanistic perspective in curricula enabling graduates to be capable leaders with the awareness soft skills to energize creativity and innovation. A limitation of this research is that one university makes it difficult to generalize to a broader population. This study is of added value for scholars and organizations in the current knowledge and innovation economy.

**Keywords :** distributed leadership, exploration, higher education institutions, innovation, knowledge creation, learning, self-efficacy

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