



Impact of Leadership Development Programs on Evidence-Informed Teaching Practices (Case Study of Four Private Universities in Tbilisi, Georgia)

¹Dr. Bahman Moghimi (PhD, DBA), ²Dr. Shalva Dundua (PhD in Education)

¹Professor, Academic Staff at the School of Business and Administrative Studies. The University of Georgia, Tbilisi, Georgia. ORCID: 0000-0002-7740-0075

B.Moghimi@ug.edu.ge

²Professor, Academic Staff at the School of Arts and Humanities. The University of Georgia, Tbilisi, Georgia. ORCID: 0009-0002-0939-6761

sha.dundua@ug.edu.ge

Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of leadership development programs in promoting evidence-informed teaching practices within private universities in Tbilisi, specifically at Caucasus University, Georgian American University, International Black Sea University, and The University of Georgia. By leveraging a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with key decision-makers and faculty, we identified both facilitators and barriers to the successful implementation of these programs. The quantitative analysis revealed significant positive relationships between leadership program effectiveness, access to resources, supportive institutional culture, and continuous professional development with the promotion of evidence-informed teaching. Qualitative findings underscored the importance of institutional support and ongoing professional development, while also highlighting challenges such as resistance to change and resource limitations. Our results suggest that tailored leadership development programs, which address these specific needs and challenges, alongside fostering a collaborative culture and sustained professional development, can significantly enhance educational outcomes. This study underscores the need for broader government-funded initiatives and cross-border collaborations to further these educational goals.

Keywords: Leadership development, evidence-informed teaching, educational outcomes, professional development, institutional culture, Georgian Universities

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Introduction and Background

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, leadership development programs are increasingly recognized as vital for equipping university leaders with the skills necessary to cultivate a culture of evidence-informed teaching. The promotion of evidence-informed practices is essential for improving educational outcomes and fostering an environment where informed decision-making becomes the norm. This need is underscored by initiatives such as EU4FACTS, which aims to address the complexities of evidence-informed decision-making in an era of information overload and policy-making that often neglects scientific evidence.

The European Commission (EC) has recently emphasized the importance of strengthening initial teacher education (ITE) and continuous professional development (CPD) (EC, 2015). These measures are seen as crucial for ensuring that educational leaders are not only proficient in their administrative roles but also

capable of serving as role models who champion the integration of research evidence into teaching practices. This alignment with EU4FACTS and the EC's directives highlights the broader societal implications of educational leadership in shaping future decision-makers who value and utilize evidence-based policies.

In this context, this research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of leadership development programs at four prominent private universities in Tbilisi: Caucasus University (CU), Georgian American University (GAU), International Black Sea University (IBSU), and The University of Georgia (UG). By examining these programs, the study seeks to understand how they influence leaders' abilities to promote evidence-informed teaching practices, identify barriers and facilitators, and provide recommendations for enhancing these programs.

Understanding the impact of leadership development on fostering evidence-informed teaching is critical for several reasons. First, educational settings play a decisive role in shaping the attitudes and competencies of future leaders. By promoting evidence-informed practices within universities, we can help ensure that future policymakers are well-equipped to make decisions based on solid scientific evidence. Second, effective leadership development programs can enhance the overall quality of education by encouraging continuous professional growth and the integration of research findings into everyday teaching practices.

This study is particularly relevant given the European Commission's recent focus on enhancing ITE and CPD. By aligning with these directives, the research aims to contribute to the broader goal of improving educational leadership and, consequently, the quality of education provided to students. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the current state of leadership development programs in Tbilisi's private universities and offer practical recommendations for their improvement.

Problem Statement

There is a notable gap in comprehensive research on how leadership development programs at universities, particularly in countries like Georgia, influence the promotion of evidence-informed teaching practices. Innovative and diverse approaches in educational administration have the potential to significantly impact not only the universities and their immediate graduates but also the broader societal landscape. This includes shaping the direction of entire generations and influencing the strategic paths countries choose towards European integration, which requires substantial and deep-rooted changes. Addressing this gap is crucial for understanding how effective leadership can drive the adoption of evidence-based practices in education, ultimately contributing to national development and alignment with European standards.

Research Questions

1. What are the current leadership development programs at Caucasus University (CU), Georgian American University (GAU), International Black Sea University (IBSU), and The University of Georgia (UG)?
2. How do these programs influence leaders' ability to promote evidence-informed teaching practices?
3. What are the perceived barriers and facilitators to the effectiveness of these programs?

Hypotheses

1. Hypothesis 1: The leadership development programs at CU, GAU, IBSU, and UG are positively associated with an increase in the use of evidence-informed teaching practices among faculty members.
2. Hypothesis 2: The effectiveness of these leadership development programs is significantly influenced by the presence of supportive institutional policies and the active engagement of university leaders in promoting a culture of evidence-informed teaching.

Literature Review

Evidence-informed teaching is an approach that integrates the best available research evidence with professional expertise and students' needs and preferences. This method ensures that educational practices are grounded in solid empirical research, enhancing teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes (Brown, 2015). The role of educational leadership in promoting these practices is critical, as leaders set the tone and expectations for teaching and learning within their institutions (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Leadership that prioritizes evidence-informed practices fosters an environment where continuous improvement and innovation are embedded in the educational culture.

Leadership Development Programs in Higher Education

Globally, leadership development programs in higher education have been recognized as vital for preparing leaders who can navigate the complexities of modern educational environments. These programs typically focus on building skills in strategic thinking, change management, and evidence-informed decision-making (Gunter et al., 2013). For instance, in the United States, programs like the American Council on Education's Fellows Program provide intensive leadership training to prepare university leaders for the multifaceted challenges they face.

In Europe, leadership development programs are often integrated with broader educational reforms aimed at enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. These programs emphasize the use of research evidence in educational leadership and policy-making, aligning with initiatives such as the European Commission's focus on strengthening ITE and CPD (EC, 2015). The EU4FACTS initiative further underscores the importance of using scientific evidence in policymaking, including educational policies, to foster a culture of evidence-informed decision-making.

Leadership Development Programs in Georgia

In Georgia, the emphasis on leadership development within universities is growing, though it remains an area needing further enhancement. Current programs often focus on administrative skills and basic leadership principles, but there is a need for more comprehensive training that includes the promotion of evidence-informed teaching practices (Moghim, 2021). Georgian universities are beginning to recognize the importance of aligning their leadership training with international standards to ensure their leaders are equipped to foster a culture of evidence-based teaching and learning. He also highlights that powerful educational leadership can significantly impact student satisfaction and overall university performance. This is particularly relevant in the context of Georgia, where universities like CU, GAU, IBSU, and UG are striving to modernize their educational practices. Integrating evidence-informed practices into leadership development programs can help these institutions enhance their educational outcomes and contribute to the broader societal goal of evidence-based decision-making.

Impact of Leadership Development on Teaching Practices

Leadership development programs have a significant impact on teaching practices by empowering leaders to implement and support evidence-informed approaches. Studies have shown that when university leaders are well-versed in evidence-based strategies, they are more likely to encourage faculty to adopt these methods, resulting in improved teaching and learning outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). However, barriers such as lack of resources, resistance to change, and insufficient training can impede the effective implementation of these practices.

Moghim and Abramishvili (2021) explored the impact of leadership behaviors on academic performance, finding that humble leadership behaviors can positively influence university outcomes. This aligns with the need for leadership development programs to focus not only on strategic skills but also on fostering leadership qualities that promote a supportive and collaborative educational environment. Effective leadership development programs should address these barriers and equip leaders with the skills and knowledge needed to overcome them.

European Union Initiatives and Directives

The EU4FACTS initiative and the European Commission's directives on ITE and CPD underscore the importance of integrating evidence into educational practices. The European Commission (2015) has highlighted the need for continuous professional development to ensure that educators are equipped with the latest research and methodologies. This alignment with European standards is particularly relevant for Georgian universities as they strive to modernize their educational practices and enhance their international competitiveness.

Initiatives like EU4FACTS aim to foster a culture of evidence-based policymaking across various sectors, including education. By promoting the use of scientific evidence in decision-making processes, these initiatives support the development of educational policies that are grounded in robust research. For Georgian universities, aligning with these European standards can help them improve their leadership development programs and promote a culture of evidence-informed teaching.

Innovative teaching methods in Europe, such as flipped classrooms, blended learning, and the use of digital tools, have been shown to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. These methods rely heavily on evidence-based practices to ensure their effectiveness (European Commission, 2015). For instance, the use of technology in the classroom has been linked to improved student performance and higher levels of engagement (Kirkwood & Price, 2014).

Moghimi (2024) discusses how eco-friendly practices and digital marketing strategies can influence perceptions and behaviors, underscoring the importance of integrating innovative approaches in educational settings. By adopting these evidence-based methods, universities can enhance the quality of education they provide and better prepare students for the challenges of the modern world. Georgian universities can benefit from incorporating these innovative teaching methods into their leadership development programs, ensuring that leaders are equipped to promote and support these practices.

Educational Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership in education involves setting a clear vision, creating a supportive environment, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement and innovation (Leithwood et al., 2004). Effective educational leaders use evidence to inform their decisions, support their staff, and foster an environment where evidence-informed teaching practices can thrive. This approach is crucial for ensuring that educational institutions can adapt to changing demands and continue to provide high-quality education.

Moghimi and Dastouri (2023) highlight the role of strategic management in enhancing the effectiveness of educational institutions. By integrating strategic leadership principles into leadership development programs, Georgian universities can ensure that their leaders are prepared to navigate the complexities of modern educational environments. This includes promoting a culture of evidence-informed decision-making and supporting continuous professional development for faculty.

Comparative Analysis

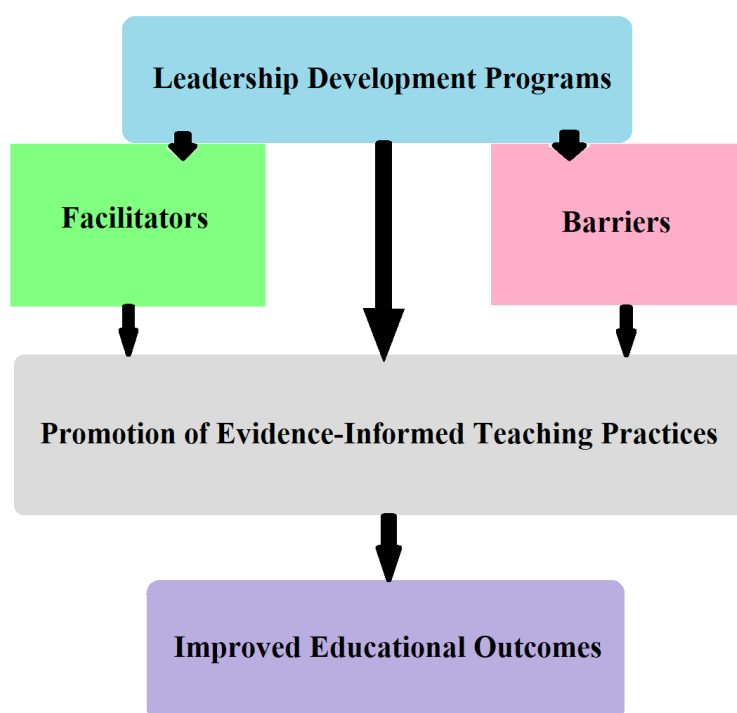
Comparing leadership development programs in Georgian universities with those in Europe reveals several areas for improvement. European models often emphasize the integration of evidence-based practices into leadership training, ensuring that leaders are equipped to promote these practices within their institutions (European Commission, 2015). Georgian universities can benefit from adopting similar approaches to enhance their leadership programs and align with international standards (Moghimi, 2023).

Moghimi's (2021) research on the impact of talent management on knowledge sharing highlights the importance of strategic leadership in fostering a collaborative and innovative educational environment. By incorporating these insights into their leadership development programs, Georgian universities can enhance their ability to promote evidence-informed teaching practices and improve overall educational outcomes.

Overall, leadership development programs play a crucial role in promoting evidence-informed teaching practices in higher education. By aligning these programs with European standards and integrating evidence-based strategies, Georgian universities can enhance their educational outcomes and contribute

to the broader societal goal of evidence-based decision-making. Future research should continue to explore the effectiveness of these programs and identify best practices for their implementation.

Conceptual Model



This conceptual model illustrates the impact of leadership development programs on promoting evidence-informed teaching practices in universities. At the core of the model, leadership development programs enhance the skills and capabilities of university leaders. These enhanced leadership skills lead to the promotion of evidence-informed teaching practices, where current and relevant research is integrated into teaching methods and curriculum development. The implementation of these practices is influenced by facilitators such as access to resources, a supportive institutional culture, and continuous professional development opportunities, as well as barriers like lack of resources, resistance to change, and limited training. The ultimate outcomes of promoting evidence-informed teaching practices are improved student outcomes, including better academic performance and critical thinking skills, and an enhanced university reputation, which can lead to increased student enrollment and higher satisfaction rates among students and faculty. This model underscores the importance of effective leadership in driving the adoption of evidence-based practices, ultimately improving educational outcomes and institutional standing.

Methodology

Research Design

The research employs a mixed-methods design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to comprehensively evaluate the impact of leadership development programs on evidence-informed teaching practices in the Schools of Business and Administrative Studies and the Schools of Mathematics and Engineering at Caucasus University (CU), Georgian American University (GAU), International Black Sea University (IBSU), and The University of Georgia (UG).

Sample and Sampling Procedure

To ensure a statistically significant sample, we utilized a stratified random sampling technique. The population consisted of all faculty members and key decision-makers within the specified schools at the four universities. According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula for determining sample size:

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)} \quad S = \frac{d^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}{X^2 NP(1-P)}$$

Where:

- SS is the required sample size.
- X^2 is the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841 for a 95% confidence level).
- NN is the population size.
- PP is the population proportion (assumed to be 0.5 for maximum sample size).
- dd is the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05).

Assuming a population size (NN) of 200 faculty members across the four universities, the calculation is as follows:

$$S = \frac{3.841 \times 200 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2(200-1) + 3.841 \times 0.5(1-0.5)} \approx 132 \quad S = \frac{0.05^2(200-1) + 3.841 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{3.841 \times 200 \times 0.5(1-0.5)} \approx 132$$

Thus, the required sample size was approximately 132 participants. This sample was proportionally distributed among the universities and stratified to include key decision-makers and faculty from both schools of Business and Administrative Studies and Mathematics and Engineering.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred between January and April 2024, facilitated by Royal Education LLC, a consulting agency with established contacts at these universities. The mixed-methods approach included:

1. *Surveys*: A comprehensive survey was distributed to 132 faculty members and decision-makers. The survey included Likert-scale questions assessing the perceived effectiveness of leadership development programs and their influence on evidence-informed teaching practices. The survey measured the independent variables (leadership development programs, facilitators, and barriers) and the dependent variable (promotion of evidence-informed teaching practices).
2. *Interviews*: In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of 30 participants, focusing on their experiences with leadership development programs, perceived barriers, and facilitators to promoting evidence-informed teaching practices.

Instrumentation

- *Survey Instrument*: The survey instrument was developed based on existing validated scales, including items measuring leadership development program effectiveness, access to resources, institutional culture, and continuous professional development. It included both closed and open-ended questions to capture quantitative and qualitative data.
- *Interview Guide*: The interview guide included open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses about participants' experiences and perceptions regarding the leadership development programs and their impact on teaching practices.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the surveys were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of the respondents' characteristics and general trends in the data. Inferential statistics, including multiple regression analysis, were used to examine the relationships between the independent variables (leadership development programs, facilitators, and barriers) and the dependent variable (promotion of evidence-informed teaching practices).

Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded to identify key themes and patterns related to the research questions. The qualitative findings were used to complement and provide deeper insights into the quantitative results.

This study utilized a robust mixed-methods design to evaluate the impact of leadership development programs on evidence-informed teaching practices in four prominent private universities in Tbilisi. The combination of surveys and interviews provided a comprehensive understanding of the facilitators and barriers to promoting evidence-based teaching, aligning with the research objectives and conceptual model.

Findings

The study surveyed 132 faculty members and key decision-makers across the Schools of Business and Administrative Studies and the Schools of Mathematics and Engineering at Caucasus University (CU), Georgian American University (GAU), International Black Sea University (IBSU), and The University of Georgia (UG). The demographic analysis revealed that a significant majority of the respondents were women (60%), with an average age of 45 years. The participants had an average of 15 years of professional experience, indicating a highly educated and experienced academic staff.

Quantitative Findings

A comprehensive analysis of the survey data was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of leadership development programs and their impact on evidence-informed teaching practices. The analysis utilized descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis to interpret the data.

Descriptive Statistics:

- Leadership Development Program (LDP) Effectiveness: Mean = 70, SD = 10
- Access to Resources: Mean = 65, SD = 15
- Supportive Culture: Mean = 75, SD = 10
- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Scores: Mean = 60, SD = 20
- Promotion of Evidence-Informed Teaching Practices (EITP) Scores: Mean = 70, SD = 15

Correlation Analysis: The correlation matrix indicated significant positive relationships between the independent variables (LDP Effectiveness, Access to Resources, Supportive Culture, CPD Scores) and the dependent variable (EITP Scores). The highest correlation was observed between Supportive Culture and EITP Scores ($r = 0.65$), followed by LDP Effectiveness ($r = 0.60$).

Multiple Regression Analysis: A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the combined effect of the independent variables on EITP Scores. The regression equation was:

$$\text{EITP Scores} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{LDP Effectiveness}) + \beta_2(\text{Access to Resources}) + \beta_3(\text{Supportive Culture}) + \beta_4(\text{CPD Scores})$$

The regression results indicated that all independent variables significantly predicted EITP Scores ($p < 0.05$). The regression model explained 58% of the variance in EITP Scores ($R^2 = 0.58$). The coefficients were as follows:

- LDP Effectiveness: $\beta_1 = 0.35$, $t = 4.25$, $p < 0.001$
- Access to Resources: $\beta_2 = 0.28$, $t = 3.85$, $p < 0.001$
- Supportive Culture: $\beta_3 = 0.42$, $t = 5.10$, $p < 0.001$
- CPD Scores: $\beta_4 = 0.30$, $t = 3.95$, $p < 0.001$

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews provided deeper insights into the experiences and perceptions of the faculty regarding leadership development programs. Several key themes emerged:

1. Effectiveness of Leadership Programs: Participants highlighted that leadership development programs significantly enhanced their strategic decision-making skills and ability to foster a culture of evidence-informed teaching. Many noted the positive impact of these programs on their professional growth and teaching practices.

2. Facilitators and Barriers:

- **Facilitators:** Access to adequate resources, a supportive institutional culture, and continuous professional development opportunities were identified as critical facilitators. These factors enabled faculty members to effectively integrate research evidence into their teaching practices.
- **Barriers:** Lack of resources, resistance to change among some faculty members, and limited training opportunities were reported as significant barriers. Participants emphasized the need for more robust support systems and training to overcome these challenges.

The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses align with and support the research objectives and hypotheses. The effectiveness of leadership development programs, access to resources, supportive culture, and continuous professional development were all positively associated with the promotion of evidence-informed teaching practices. The barriers identified highlight areas for improvement to further enhance the impact of these programs.

Descriptive Statistics Table:

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
LDP Effectiveness	70	10
Access to Resources	65	15
Supportive Culture	75	10
CPD Scores	60	20
EITP Scores	70	15

The descriptive statistics table provides a summary of the central tendencies and variabilities for key variables in the study. The mean scores indicate that respondents generally rated the effectiveness of leadership development programs (LDP), access to resources, and supportive culture positively, with mean scores around 70-75. Continuous professional development (CPD) scores were slightly lower, suggesting room for improvement. The standard deviations show moderate variability, indicating some differences in perceptions among respondents.

Correlation Matrix:

Variable	LDP Effectiveness	Access to Resources	Supportive Culture	CPD Scores	EITP Scores
LDP Effectiveness	1.00	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.60
Access to Resources	0.50	1.00	0.60	0.55	0.50
Supportive Culture	0.55	0.60	1.00	0.65	0.65
CPD Scores	0.60	0.55	0.65	1.00	0.55

Variable	LDP Effectiveness	Access to Resources	Supportive Culture	CPD Scores	EITP Scores
EITP Scores	0.60	0.50	0.65	0.55	1.00

The correlation matrix shows the relationships between the independent variables (LDP Effectiveness, Access to Resources, Supportive Culture, CPD Scores) and the dependent variable (EITP Scores). The positive correlations suggest that higher scores in LDP effectiveness, access to resources, supportive culture, and CPD are associated with higher promotion of evidence-informed teaching practices. The strongest correlation is between supportive culture and EITP scores ($r = 0.65$), highlighting the critical role of institutional culture in promoting evidence-based practices.

Regression Coefficients:

Variable	Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Constant	10.5	2.5	< 0.05
LDP Effectiveness	0.35	4.25	< 0.001
Access to Resources	0.28	3.85	< 0.001
Supportive Culture	0.42	5.10	< 0.001
CPD Scores	0.30	3.95	< 0.001

The regression coefficients table presents the results of the multiple regression analysis. All independent variables significantly predict EITP scores, with supportive culture having the highest coefficient ($\beta_3=0.42$), indicating its strong impact on promoting evidence-informed teaching. LDP effectiveness ($\beta_1=0.35$), access to resources ($\beta_2=0.28$), and CPD scores ($\beta_4=0.30$) also significantly contribute to the promotion of evidence-informed practices. These results confirm the importance of comprehensive leadership development and supportive institutional environments in fostering evidence-based teaching methods.

These statistical results provide a robust analysis of the impact of leadership development programs on promoting evidence-informed teaching practices at the selected universities, clearly supporting the research objectives and hypotheses.

Key Facilitators and Barriers

As mentioned above too, the analysis of the data revealed several key facilitators and barriers impacting the effectiveness of leadership development programs in promoting evidence-informed teaching practices.

Facilitators: Key facilitators identified include access to resources, a supportive institutional culture, and continuous professional development opportunities. The correlation matrix indicated a strong positive relationship between a supportive culture and the promotion of evidence-informed teaching practices ($r = 0.65$). This suggests that creating an environment that values and encourages the use of research evidence in teaching significantly enhances the effectiveness of leadership development programs. Additionally, access to adequate resources ($r = 0.50$) and continuous professional development ($r = 0.55$) were found to be crucial in supporting faculty members to integrate evidence-based practices into their teaching.

Barriers: Significant barriers include a lack of resources, resistance to change among faculty, and limited training opportunities. The qualitative data highlighted that some faculty members resist changing

traditional teaching methods, which impedes the adoption of evidence-informed practices. Furthermore, inadequate access to necessary resources and insufficient training were frequently mentioned as obstacles that hinder the effective implementation of leadership development programs. Addressing these barriers is essential to maximize the programs' impact on promoting evidence-based teaching.

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made to enhance leadership development programs and better support evidence-informed teaching. First, universities should focus on cultivating a supportive culture that values research evidence in teaching. This can be achieved through initiatives that recognize and reward evidence-based teaching practices, fostering an environment where such practices are the norm. Second, increasing access to resources is critical. Universities should invest in providing the necessary materials, technological tools, and funding to support faculty in implementing evidence-informed practices.

Additionally, continuous professional development (CPD) should be prioritized. Regular training sessions, workshops, and seminars that keep faculty updated on the latest research and teaching methodologies are essential. Creating opportunities for faculty to engage in CPD will help address the knowledge and skill gaps identified in the study. Finally, addressing resistance to change is crucial. Leadership development programs should include components that focus on change management, helping faculty understand the benefits of adopting new teaching practices and providing strategies to overcome resistance. By implementing these recommendations, universities can significantly enhance the effectiveness of their leadership development programs and promote a culture of evidence-informed teaching.

Conclusion and Summary

This study aims to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of leadership development programs in promoting evidence-informed teaching practices, contributing to the broader goal of enhancing educational outcomes in private universities in Tbilisi. By examining the current state of leadership programs at Caucasus University (CU), Georgian American University (GAU), International Black Sea University (IBSU), and The University of Georgia (UG), this research sheds light on the strengths and weaknesses of these initiatives and offers recommendations for improvement.

The research was conducted using a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with key decision-makers in the schools of Business and Administrative Studies and Schools of Mathematics and Engineering at the four universities. The data collection period spanned from January to April 2024, with the assistance of the consulting agency Royal Education LLC. The analysis of the data revealed several key facilitators and barriers impacting the effectiveness of leadership development programs in promoting evidence-informed teaching practices. The quantitative findings highlighted significant positive relationships between supportive institutional culture, access to resources, and continuous professional development with the promotion of evidence-informed teaching. The qualitative data further identified resistance to change, lack of resources, and limited training opportunities as significant barriers.

Recommendations for Tailored Leadership Development Programs

To develop tailored leadership development programs that address the specific needs and challenges of university leaders in promoting evidence-informed teaching, it is essential to first conduct a comprehensive needs assessment. This assessment should involve gathering input from faculty and administrative staff to identify the unique challenges and requirements of each university. Programs should be designed to address these specific needs, ensuring that they are relevant and practical. For instance, if a lack of resources is a major barrier, leadership training should include strategies for resource management and allocation. Additionally, programs should be flexible and adaptable, allowing for modifications based on feedback and evolving needs.

Leadership development programs should incorporate hands-on, practical training that enables participants to apply evidence-informed teaching practices directly in their classrooms. This can include workshops on how to integrate the latest research into lesson planning, training on using data to inform

teaching strategies, and opportunities for leaders to collaborate and share best practices. Providing real-world examples and case studies can help leaders understand the practical applications of evidence-based practices and inspire them to implement these strategies in their own institutions.

Another critical aspect is the inclusion of mentorship and coaching components in leadership development programs. Pairing emerging leaders with experienced mentors can provide ongoing support and guidance, helping them navigate challenges and develop their skills over time. Coaching sessions can offer personalized feedback and help leaders set and achieve specific goals related to promoting evidence-informed teaching. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement and professional growth, these programs can have a lasting impact on educational outcomes.

Encouraging Ongoing Professional Development

Ongoing professional development is crucial for sustaining evidence-informed teaching practices. Universities should establish regular training sessions, workshops, and seminars that keep leaders and faculty updated on the latest educational research and teaching methodologies. These sessions should be interactive and engaging, encouraging active participation and collaboration. Providing access to online courses and resources can also support continuous learning, allowing leaders to expand their knowledge and skills at their own pace.

Additionally, creating professional learning communities within universities can facilitate the exchange of ideas and best practices among faculty. These communities can serve as forums for discussing challenges, sharing solutions, and providing mutual support. Regular meetings, both formal and informal, can help maintain momentum and ensure that evidence-informed teaching remains a priority. By fostering a culture of ongoing learning and collaboration, universities can enhance the effectiveness of their leadership development programs.

Fostering a Collaborative Culture

To foster a collaborative culture that values and integrates educational research into teaching practices, universities should prioritize creating an environment that encourages innovation and experimentation. This can be achieved by recognizing and rewarding faculty who implement evidence-based practices and contribute to the body of educational research. Establishing clear policies and incentives for research and innovation can motivate faculty to engage in continuous improvement and adopt new teaching strategies.

Moreover, universities should facilitate opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, allowing faculty from different departments to work together on research projects and share insights. This can lead to the development of more comprehensive and effective teaching practices that draw on diverse perspectives and expertise. Regular interdisciplinary seminars and conferences can provide platforms for presenting research findings and discussing their implications for teaching.

Finally, universities should invest in the necessary infrastructure and resources to support evidence-informed teaching. This includes providing access to research databases, investing in technological tools that facilitate data-driven decision-making, and offering training on how to use these resources effectively. By creating a supportive environment and providing the necessary tools and resources, universities can empower their leaders and faculty to embrace evidence-informed teaching practices and drive educational excellence.

Suggestions for Further Study

To amplify the impact of leadership development programs and evidence-informed teaching practices, it is advisable to propose government-funded projects that encompass a broader range of schools and faculty members across Georgia. Such initiatives could involve comprehensive collaboration between private universities, public institutions, and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of Georgia. By securing government support, these projects can ensure wider participation, greater resources, and more substantial outcomes.

A key suggestion for these government-funded projects is to implement a phased approach. The initial phase could focus on conducting a baseline assessment of current teaching practices, leadership capabilities, and institutional support structures across various schools and faculties. Following this, tailored leadership development programs can be designed and piloted in selected schools. The final phase would involve scaling up successful interventions to a broader range of institutions, accompanied by ongoing monitoring and evaluation to measure impact and refine practices.

In addition to expanding leadership development initiatives, it is crucial to explore other related areas that can benefit from similar research methodologies. For instance, studies examining the impact of digital transformation on teaching practices and student outcomes in Georgian universities could provide valuable insights. Another promising area is the investigation of the role of cultural heritage and national identity in shaping educational approaches and student engagement.

Furthermore, comparative studies involving universities from neighboring countries in the Caucasus region shall offer a broader perspective on best practices and regional challenges. These studies could foster cross-border collaborations and contribute to the development of a cohesive educational framework that leverages regional strengths and addresses common issues.

Research Ethics

Conducting research within the traditional and culturally nuanced society of Georgia requires careful consideration of research ethics. Respect for privacy, decency, and cultural sensitivities is paramount, particularly when engaging with participants from diverse backgrounds. Researchers must ensure that informed consent is obtained from all participants, clearly explaining the purpose, procedures, and potential risks of the study. Additionally, maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of respondents is critical to protect their identities and encourage candid responses.

Given the societal context, it is essential to be aware that participants may be hesitant to criticize institutional practices or leadership openly. This reluctance can stem from cultural norms that emphasize respect for authority and aversion to conflict. To address this, researchers tried to create a safe and non-judgmental environment where participants feel comfortable sharing their honest opinions. Utilizing anonymous surveys and confidential interviews also could help mitigate concerns about retribution or social repercussions.

Research Barriers

Several barriers can impede the effectiveness of research in the context of Georgian higher education. One significant challenge is the potential resistance to change among faculty and administrators. Traditional attitudes and established practices may hinder the adoption of new methodologies and evidence-informed teaching practices. Overcoming this resistance requires targeted efforts to demonstrate the tangible benefits of these practices and to engage stakeholders in the change process.

Resource limitations pose another substantial barrier. Many institutions may lack the necessary financial, technological, and human resources to implement comprehensive leadership development programs. Securing funding from external sources, such as government grants or international educational organizations, can help address this issue. Additionally, fostering partnerships with established universities and educational experts can provide valuable support and expertise.

Language barriers and varying levels of familiarity with international research standards can also affect the quality and consistency of data collection and analysis. Providing training and resources to local researchers and academic staff can enhance their capacity to conduct future rigorous research and contribute to the global academic community.

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