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## Editorial: The Need for Good Leaders in Higher Education

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## Editorial: The Need for Good Leaders in Higher Education

### Abstract

Consistently, and without pause, have ethical, social, and moral crises plagued the higher educational domain. With rapidly changing student bases, staff profiles, and funding structures, university leaders and managers have been required to do, and be, more. In times of crisis, heightened complexity, and competition, leaders have struggled with greater frequency to be, and do, good. In parallel, students and learners have juggled more, had more diverse motivations for studying, and been less homogenous with the once-typical nineteen-year-old recent high school graduate. In recent years, there have been repeated stories of unethical practices of leadership. While catastrophising is not the aim, nor pursuit, of this editorial, these provide context for the Journal's expansion into educational leadership, management, and educational psychology in higher education. With the rise of software to make cheating easier, opportunities to outsource dissertations, and a more turbulent sector, it will be the leaders who sustain teams, and build good educational outcomes.

### Practitioner Notes

1. There is a lack of space available for educational leadership research in higher education.
2. JUTLP has expanded its scope to enable educational leadership research
3. Most educational psychology journals focus on school psychology, rather than psychology at the university-level.
4. JUTLP has created a section on educational psychology in higher education to allow scholars greater focus.

### Keywords

educational leadership, educational psychology, academic publishing, scholarship of learning and teaching, SoTL, EdLeadership, EdPsych

## **Editorial: The Need for Good Leaders in Higher Education**

Consistently, and without pause, have ethical, social, and moral crises plagued the higher educational domain. With rapidly changing student bases, staff profiles, and funding structures, university leaders and managers have been required to do, and be, more. In times of crisis, heightened complexity, and competition, leaders have struggled with greater frequency to be, and do, good. In parallel, students and learners have juggled more, had more diverse motivations for studying, and been less homogenous with the once-typical nineteen-year-old recent high school graduate.

In recent years, there have been repeated stories of unethical practices of leadership. While catastrophising is not the aim, nor pursuit, of this editorial, these provide context for the Journal's expansion into educational leadership, management, and educational psychology in higher education. With the rise of software to make cheating easier, opportunities to outsource dissertations, and a more turbulent sector, it will be the leaders who sustain teams, and build good educational outcomes.

### **Creating Space for Good Leadership**

In the organisational behaviour and leadership discipline, there have been decades of focus on the separation between leadership, management, leaders, and managers (e.g., Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Newstead et al., 2021). In pursuit of clarity between good leaders and management practices in organisational literature, there has been considerable conceptual overlap with studies of leadership typically using role- and authority-based participants (e.g., managers and their subordinates). And, in many ways, this has offered a challenge to effective research on leadership in exception to positional power. Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) highlight the distinction in ways followers are treated in research including frequency of role-based and leader-centric approaches to considering how best to cultivate effective followership.

In higher education, the focus on leadership follows a similar vein. In an earlier review of leadership behaviour in higher education, thirteen behaviours existed prior to 2007 (Bryman, 2007). These included: clear direction and vision, preparing departments for that direction, consideration, relational fairness and integrity, trustworthiness and personal integrity, participative decision-making practice, communicating the vision, role-modelling, facilitating positive culture, proactive pursuit of organisational goals, providing feedback, adjusting workloads and resourcing for research and scholarship, and enhancing reputation through effective academic appointments. Bryman (2007) offered considerable insight into how managers deploy both management and leadership practices within a higher education context. Yet, and like many before, and many to come, this work conflates these practices. Organising workloads takes good management (Graham, 2016), communicating a vision (e.g., transformational leadership: Mhatre & Riggio, 2014) and role-modelling requires effective leadership (e.g., authentic leadership: Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

Across the higher education discipline, there is limited space for dedicated quality literature on how good leadership practices are understood, cultivated, and developed. And, indeed how this effects students, staff, and educational outcomes. In Google Scholar's category of 'educational

administration', there is space for educational leadership (e.g., *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* and *International Journal of Leadership in Education*), yet they often prioritise and focus on school-level leadership and management practices. In the top 20 journals, none specialise in higher education. In the top 20 journals in Google Scholar's higher education category, none specialise in leadership. Although, one publishes on policy and management (*Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*). Scopus and Web of Science paint a similar picture. That is, despite that academics and students rely so heavily on leaders and leadership in higher education, the section has not effectively supported or encouraged sufficient research in this domain. The Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice editors have recognised this call, and offer a section comprising up to approximately sixteen manuscripts per annum that will focus on leadership and management in the context of higher education. The focus for the Journal is on translation to practice drawing on appropriate literature on leadership both within and without the education discipline. In this, the Journal provides a short form aims and scope for the section:

*Educational leadership and management. In pursuit of good leaders, great leadership, and effective management within higher education that enables quality learning and teaching processes and practices.*

In this, the Journal seeks academic work that is embedded deeply within the higher education context including connecting in with historically prevalent theories applied in higher education (e.g., Astin & Astin, 2000; Bolden et al., 2008; Reyes et al., 2019). Indeed, the Journal has also received recent works in leadership in higher education, and some of these have been published (e.g., Aiston, 2022; Butler-Henderson et al., 2022; Harvey & Jones, 2022; Nachatar Singh, 2022; Ryan & Goldingay, 2022). Scholarship in higher education leaders and leadership practices are critical to the success of the discipline and how its goals are organised.

This Journal does recognise the intrinsic difference between leadership and management, and indeed leaders and leadership (see Crawford et al., 2020; Newstead et al., 2021). Importantly, while managers deploy power and authority, leaders influence those around them to want to achieve. They are deeply connected and managers often enact good leadership practices, but they are different. Below, the Journal's long form aims and scope expressed the types and nature of educational leadership that is publishable in the section:

*We invite contributions that extend our current knowledge of good leaders, effective managers, and great leadership practices in higher education. We acknowledge key differences in leaders (i.e., those who influence others to act of their own volition) and managers (i.e., those who deploy formal power and authority). Educational leadership and management will further our practices of how learning and teaching is organised by individuals, organisations, and policy drawing on appropriate management, leadership, and organisational behavioural research.*

## **Exploring the Psychology of Scholars**

The world is an incredibly complex place, and students, academics, and teaching and learning administrators like all other people sit at the centre of the that complex place. The affective, behavioural, and cognitive processes and functions of those in the academic community have

experienced significant change over the Journal's lifespan. There is an increasing need for space to explore the underlying psychology of higher education systems and its constituents. Boyer (1990) wrote of the scholarship of teaching as educating and enticing future scholars, and the way in which this is most effective is not as well understood in higher education as other domains. For example, the literature primarily speaks of pedagogy, despite that its fundamental design is aimed at younger learners rather than young adults (the typical student) and mature aged learners (a growing cohort).

With greater frequency, higher education is turning to prescription and punishment methods to respond to changing societal and environmental landscapes. In the realm of contract cheating, scholars point to better detection methods (Dawson & Sutherlands-Smith, 2018; Harper et al., 2021), working out who cheats more (Klein et al., 2007; Yu et al., 2017), curriculum and assessment design engineering (Bretag et al., 2019a, 2019b), and governments turn to legislation banning the activity (e.g., the Australian *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Amendment (Prohibiting Academic Cheating Services) Bill 2019*). Yet, few scholars however focus on character development and ethical training as an antidote for cheating consideration, despite calls for it (e.g., McCabe et al., 2001; Wright, 2015). An educational or developmental psychology response may be to test behavioural development in students that would promote future ethical decision making (e.g., academic integrity); this section will provide space for an educational psychology response to this challenge, along with many others facing higher education.

In recent years, like educational leadership, there have been a dearth of access to dedicated space for scholars to pursue the questions of psychology in a higher education setting. On Google Scholar's ranking list, the top 20 journals for educational psychology and counselling have no space exclusively for higher education-based psychology, with most journals emphasising school-level educational psychology either explicitly (e.g., *Journal of School Psychology*) or implicitly (e.g., not typically accepting higher education-related studies). Indeed, the Journal has received and published under other sections works pertaining to educational psychology. For example, Shaked and Altarac (2022) speak to procrastination and self-regulation, and sense of belonging has been a reoccurring theme within the journal (e.g., Press et al., 2022; Tice et al., 2021).

While the scholars in educational psychology in other educational levels (e.g., primary, and high school), the representation inside of the higher education level is less pronounced. Despite this, the higher education sector has experienced incredible change that is influencing how education is delivered to diverse adult learners. These adult learners operate inside of an educational landscape unique to students in other learning environments. In response, the Journal has developed space for up to sixteen manuscripts dedicated to a greater understanding of the psychology informing, and explaining, the practical learning and teaching environment. In this, the Journal provides a short form aims and scope for the educational psychology section:

*Educational psychology in higher education. Pursuing a more cohesive understanding of the psychology underlying and explaining tertiary learning and instruction practices.*

In the examination of complex human behaviour inside of the higher education domain, the Journal encourages contributions from authors seeking to extend contemporary understandings leveraging unique contextual differences that exist within universities and college environments.

To this end, the Journal provides a long form aims and scope for those submitting to the educational psychology section:

*We invite contributions that extend on the current understanding of psychological processes and mechanisms in the higher education and university context. There are key contributions offered by developmental and educational psychology scholars in universities including defining affective, cognitive, and behavioural processes that affect learning, learners, and educators. Educational psychology in higher education studies will further learning and teaching practices through a psychological lens, with an emphasis on human learning and development in universities and colleges.*

## **A Call to Action**

The introduction of dedicated sections on educational leadership and educational psychology in higher education provide opportunities for scholars to examine the nature of humans more critically within educational bureaucracies that frequently dismiss the people within their teams and classes. These sections offer an opportunity to explore what it means to be learner, to experience learning, and to lead in learning environments.

When the Journal introduced sections to pursue more specific areas of learning and teaching practice, the aim was to allow more targeted appointments of editors and reviewers with expertise in those areas. The expected benefit was a more rigorous process of peer and editorial review that supported scholars, recognising that those with experience in academic development ('developing teaching practice'), student experience, educational technology, and curriculum and assessment may not have cultivated expertise in other areas of the Journal. When these sections were initially introduced, they were a representation of the existing manuscripts the Journal received organised into four distinct themes, and Section Editorial teams have since published editorials clarifying their expectations of submissions and considerations for prospective authors (Ali et al., 2021; Cowling et al., 2022; Gonzalez et al., 2021; Percy et al., 2021).

The two new sections were not formed based on manuscripts currently received, and instead focus on the types of manuscripts and scholarship the Senior Editor team believe are necessary and needed in contemporary higher education. The Senior Editor team examined a range of thematic areas that ought to be encouraged in higher education scholarship and found these two to best represent what is needed now. These two sections offer an important and complementary contribution to the existing section portfolio and provide a full accompaniment to the journals overarching aims and scope.

With the introduction of these sections, the Journal encourages scholars within higher education to build research that supports and addressed the aims and scopes listed in this Editorial. And to extend what it means to lead, and be, well in higher education; recognising that there is also a need for research in areas where higher education has failed to lead, and support, the people in its systems and community well.

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