Changing Leadership Identities in HE: the Role of Trust and Organisational Cultures in Recessionary HE

Dr Jill Jameson
University of Greenwich
- The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education

- University of Greenwich GRE Team
Overview

• Background and context

• Trust and leadership/LFHE Research data: 410 HE/PC respondents: selective data

• Recommendations

• Your views and questions
‘Age of insecurity’: recessionary UK HE

- Financial recession, ‘bear market’: harsher climate values
- Largely economic, individual-focused HE policy changes
- 1.2% GDP spent on UK HE, below OECD average 1.5%
- Bi-polar sector: ‘Squeezed middle’ between elite-mass
- Wider culture of greed/vanity/show, veneration of ‘stars’
Instability

• "We ask the UK Government to reconsider and then substantially revise the unsustainable policies which have introduced instability across the UK university sector."
Is the concept of higher education as a universal public good sustainable?

• “We have to question the **integrity** of the White Paper proposals… both in terms of whether the promised economic and social benefits really will flow from these plans and the extent to which it is really **markets** rather than students who are now being placed at the heart of the system.

SRHE HE White Paper Response
13th September 2011
Bear market values

- Prolonged period of economic depression, investments fall, economy slows, unemployment rises = negative, uncharitable mood. Higher risks of losses. Darwinian survival of fittest. Ethical values, trust, good leadership more difficult. Those already struggling in HE have an even harder time. Those who are ‘fit’ survive more easily.

Reference:
‘Trust’

- “Surrender yourself humbly, for then you can be trusted to care for all things” (Lao Tse, c.6th BC, Tao Te Ching, 13)


- Kouzes & Posner (1993): trust and credibility of managers is built on values-oriented leadership characterised by integrity, honesty, high standards of moral conduct and emotional intelligence.
‘Without trust we cannot stand’ (O’Neill, 2002)

Trust and Leadership 2010-12

Is trust important to you? Please specify below why/why not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why/why not:

- Answered question: 105
- Skipped question: 4

Figure 1: Q6: 105 responses in Survey Three
What is Trust?

- Trust = ‘have confidence or faith in”
- a relational psychological state/moral value
- important but also dangerous (risk, betrayal)
- belief in honesty, benevolence & competence of others; moderating effect of trust – relational and character-based.
Value of trust: tangible asset

Figure 11: Quality, transparency, trust, and employee welfare most important to corporate reputation

How important are these factors to corporate reputation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High quality products or services</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparent and honest business practices</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company I can trust</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treats employees well</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates frequently</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prices fairly</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good corporate citizen</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovator</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widely admired leadership</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial returns</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Edelman Trust Barometer 2011: 6

Responses 8-9 only on 1-9 scale, 9=highest. Informed publics ages 25 to 64 in 23 countries.
Politicians remain the least trusted profession measured: just one in seven people (14%) say they trust politicians in general to tell the truth; just one person in six, 17%, say they trust government ministers. To make matters worse for politicians, more people say they trust journalists (19%) and bankers (29%) than politicians.

Source: Ipsos MORI Poll for the British Medical Association, June 2011
Politicians mistrusted: rhetoric of HE policy

**Euphemisms:** student
‘choice’/consumerism, social mobility, public expenditure savings

**Empty sound bites:** ‘Big Society’
‘Students at the Heart of the System’
Changing leadership identities

• “Fractures and fault-lines’ that divide aspects of our academic lives” (Rowlands, 2004:02, cited by McNay, 2011). UK HE leadership: ‘power culture’ of harder ‘new public management’: conformity, over-accountability, performativity

• Binary divide managerialism/collegiality simplistic (Clegg et al., 2005) academic values still challenged by expedient instrumentalism of ‘new managerialism’ (Deem & Brehony 2005). Govt HE policies: economic/market focus.

• Academic staff may find it hard to trust coercive and controlling micro-managers: trust may require long-term relationships built on foundations of mutual support.
Leadership Identities: complex Agency, resistance, values-based

- HE leaders can and do resist ‘new managerialism’, maintain authenticity and individual agency, adhering to public sector professional collegiate values, despite or within selective strategic compliance to ‘managerial’ demands.

- trust, agency, resistance and values-based leadership exist in ‘pockets’ of good practice in selected institutions, still evidence of excellent, trustworthy, trusted leadership, despite apparent domination of new managerialism.
Danger Ethical fading: self-deception

- Moral implications of decisions fade: incomprehensible behaviour is explained away

- ‘Bounded awareness’ – theory that we see what we want to see, fail to recognise double standards, act in self-interested ways re. vested interests, without realising implications, e.g. on vulnerable students.

Methodology: Data collection

* **A small research team** - four academics: one professor, one reader and two early career academics.


* **An earlier survey** extended to consider trust 2009-11.

* **Semi-structured interviews (n = 20) inc.** VCs, professors of higher education and related subjects, middle managers, SLs and lecturers from across the UK at both ‘elite’ and ‘mass’ post-1992 HEIs. Interviews c. 45-90 minutes- digital audio-recording and written notes.
## Table 1: Leadership Interviews and Surveys 2004-11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviews:</strong> PC/HE Mixed levels</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey 1: PC/HE Mainly SMT</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey 2: PC/HE Mixed levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>145</td>
<td></td>
<td>145</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey 3: PC/HE Trust, all levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey 4: Trust, HE-FE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>109</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviews:</strong> HE Mixed levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus group:</strong> HE Mixed levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brief reflection on selected data on leadership: c.45 interviews and 351 survey responses from managers & academic staff in UK HE, PCE and FE 2004-11. LFHE: 109 survey, c.20 interviews.

Data collected by Jameson (2004-09) and Jameson, McNay, Carpenter and Barnard (2010-11).
Organisational cultures:
How would you rate management in your organisation a/c Blake & Mouton (1978) four profiles for management re. concerns for people, tasks and/or teams?

- Impoverished management: 9.1%
- Authority/Compliance management: 18.2%
- Middle of the Road management: 18.2%
- Country Club management: 33.3%
- Team management: 21.2%
- Other:
How far do you trust the senior leadership team in your institution to achieve the following?

- Good management standards
- Student Success
- Well-being of staff
- Success of the institution
- Good Financial management
McNay: Organisational cultures model: universities

Source: Dopson and McNay (1996)  
(See also: McNay, 1995; 1999)
## Summary Characteristics of Four University Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Collageum</th>
<th>Bureaucracy</th>
<th>Corporation</th>
<th>Enterprise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominant value (Clark 1983)</td>
<td>freedom</td>
<td>equity</td>
<td>loyalty</td>
<td>competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of central authorities</td>
<td>permissive</td>
<td>regulatory</td>
<td>directive</td>
<td>supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handy's organization culture</td>
<td>person</td>
<td>role</td>
<td>power</td>
<td>task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant unit</td>
<td>department/individual</td>
<td>faculty/committees</td>
<td>institution/Senior Management Team</td>
<td>sub-unit/project teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision arenas administrative briefings</td>
<td>informal groups networks</td>
<td>committees and</td>
<td>working parties and Senior Management Team</td>
<td>project teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management style</td>
<td>consensual</td>
<td>formal/’rational’</td>
<td>political/tactical</td>
<td>!devolved leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeframe</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>cyclic</td>
<td>short/mid-term</td>
<td>instant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental 'fit'</td>
<td>evolution</td>
<td>stability</td>
<td>crisis</td>
<td>turbulence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of change</td>
<td>organic innovation</td>
<td>reactive adaptation</td>
<td>proactive transformation</td>
<td>tactical flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External referents</td>
<td>invisible college</td>
<td>regulatory bodies</td>
<td>policymakers as opinion leaders</td>
<td>clients/sponsors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal referents</td>
<td>the discipline</td>
<td>the rules</td>
<td>the plans</td>
<td>market strength/students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis for evaluation</td>
<td>peer assessment</td>
<td>audit of procedures, e.g. IS9001</td>
<td>performance indicators</td>
<td>repeat business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student status</td>
<td>apprentice academic</td>
<td>statistic</td>
<td>unit of resource</td>
<td>customer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator roles:</td>
<td>the community</td>
<td>the committee</td>
<td>the chief executive</td>
<td>the 'client, internal and external</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant of ‘...’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interim findings

Severe criticism of current government policy on HE

Developing trust in a mistrustful policy environment

“The government is ignorant in its perceptions of the public sector in general and modern universities in particular.

The sector itself is bitterly divided, with the elitist lobby arguing for favours. This government adopts a policy that is illiberal, elitist, anti-WAP”. (LFHE#2)
Protective role: ‘good’ leaders filter out problems

Developing trust in a mistrustful policy environment

Senior professorial interviewee: external HE environment an “unstable mix of daft statist policies and uncontrollable market forces, with ‘all the fireworks going off at once.’… a fissile mix of complex funding and control of numbers with a rhetoric of student choice, being responded to by a new generation of games players within the institutions.” (LFHE#1)

A main function of the leader is boundary management – stopping the shit from outside coming in [via the corporate bureaucracy. #3 agreed with view that modern university heads are less leaders looking out, and more managers looking in from a system perspective]. (LFHE#3).
UK-wide HE/Academic leadership identities

**Academic leadership should be from active academics** – at course and project level, developing new ideas and approaches. PVCs etc. are managers: prefer “up-from-the-bottom innovation”.

**Lack of trust across ‘gangs’ of institutional groupings**
Growing wedge between FT and PT/contingent academic staff, and another wedge between Teaching/Research focus

**Academic leaders beaten down, self-absorbed**
Senior professorial interviewee: “The academic community is so beaten down and pathetic and so self-absorbed as to be unaware of bigger issues affecting them.” (LFHE#1)
Q11: ‘I would describe the leadership and management of the organisation I work for in the following way’ (HE & FE)

‘Wholly ineffective & probably incapable of running a whelk stall.’ (T&L#105, FT Lecturer, HE & FE College)

‘At senior levels, the quality of management & leadership is unacceptable. There is a serious lack of accountability.’ (T&L#27, FT Professor, University).

‘Crude, deceitful, hiding their mistakes, pushing people to the limit for short-term savings that finish up costing much more. Ignoring student needs & insights on these from staff.’ (T&L#130, PT Lecturer, HE and FE College, London)

‘Top down petty bureaucrats: main interest is in making money.’ (T&L#136, PT Lecturer, University, South West).
Q11: I would describe the leadership and management of the organisation I work for in the following way (HE):

- Management has a clear vision for the organisation, but not one I share. Dept. management are too driven by external factors, senior managers, Government policy & diktats. But this is a common phenomenon: careers, status, power & money comprise a sieve through which everything is driven. (T&L #59, FT Lecturer, University, Midlands)

- Inconsistent & unsupportive. This is not due entirely to individuals, but a new management structure which blurs lines of responsibility, accountability, line management. I am responsible to 3 different managers for different aspects of my job (Principal Lecturer). This is confusing, unhelpful & stressful. (T&L#47, FT Lecturer, University, London).
Q11: I would describe the leadership and management of the organisation I work for in the following way (HE):

- Leadership is lacking … I feel we have no real direction. Senior management does not appear to have an understanding of the dept & its role in the university. Staff often complain of being undervalued. (T&L#138, FT Lecturer, University, London)

- Variable. Some leaders are informed and supportive. Others, however, usually the ones with budgetary powers, seem distanced & removed from staff on front line delivery, little interested unless there is a problem & when there is a problem, are slow or unwilling to help support staff to address it. (T&L#64, Programme Leader, HE-FE College, SW).
Q11: I would describe the leadership and management of the organisation I work for in the following way (HE):

• Distant, remote, out of touch, invisible, well meaning, trying (in a positive sense), somewhat aware of what needs to be done (T&L#115, Head of Department, HE-FE College, London).

• Some of the senior managers have very poor leadership skills. But they think they are fine. (T&L#68, Programme Leader, Higher and Further Education College, Wales).

• Good intentions, but constrained by underpinning values they probably do not subscribe to. (T&L#49, Programme Leader, University, South East).
'Trust is a very difficult concept for organisations run on “command and control” systems.... [many] .. see ‘trust’ as one of those things they’re going to bring in, like ‘Oh, we’re going to have a new logo’.... it’s something mechanistic & easy, they can just send everyone on a course & then we’ll have ‘trust’ in our organisation....

HR managers ... think that you can just go to Woolworths, get a packet of “Trust”, bring it back and grow it. The fundamental levels of integrity & human calibre it demands of people in significant roles is not understood by lightweight middle managers.... who resort to emails & control & command....’ (T&L#12, Lecturer, GFEC, SWest).
Resistance and individual agency

Q19: Can you find a metaphor to describe leadership?

‘Good leaders are critical of government policy and prepared to fight against it!’ (T&L#59, University lecturer, Midlands).

Q14: What are the most important qualities needed to develop good leadership?

‘Real understanding of needs of learners, ability to generate loyalty & commitment from staff despite poor pay & conditions, communicate with staff at all levels, "stand up to" officials & policy makers [who] impose unrealistic, demotivating policies & practices on institutions’. (T&L#9, FT Lecturer, University, North West).
Emerging findings – LFHE

While there are some examples of very good leadership and high trust in effective high quality organisational cultures, there seems also to be a problem in a minority of selected HE leadership organisations re. a lack of trust, linked to deficits in shared values and a difficult external environment. Leaders can and do act as protective ‘filters’ in the best situations: specific training is recommended.
What is the basis of trust?

‘Honest collaborative relationships, based on shared interests in a creative, community-based process of common endeavour and innovative practice.’

(T&L#9, Charitable Post-16 Education Group, London).
Values-based leadership

‘Shortly before I became Principal, I visited a number of Community Colleges in America and for the first time came across a college that had spent some time defining and agreeing its **values**. I was struck by how different that organisation “felt” from the others that I had visited and it made me think much more about the importance to a successful organisation of having a clear and accepted **value-based culture.**’

(Dr David Collins, CEO/Principal, PhD, CBE, South Cheshire Tertiary College, ‘**Outstanding**’ in all aspects of provision 2008, highest Ofsted Inspection Grades in UK 1994-2004, Best Companies 'Star Status' for 2008; 58th place, **The Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For** in 2007 list - 61st in 2006 list).
Values-based leadership in HE

Kouzes and Posner (1993): the trust and credibility of managers is built on values-oriented leadership characterised by integrity, honesty, high standards of moral conduct and emotional intelligence.
Recommendations

Open, honest style recommended, even if hard truths.

Trust is easier to destroy than to develop

Building trust: Integrity, benevolence, competence, openness, loyalty, consistency. Trust is built slowly, but there can also be immediate trust, e.g. for strangers, if predisposing factors allow this. Some situations inspire only cautious trust.

Be accessible [not same as visible]. Respond to emails; have drop in surgeries. If people debate, listen, engage, argue

Be clear about your values.
Recommendations

Values-based leadership and trust-building behaviours: collaborative leadership in HE


This is only a snapshot: more research to assess situation re. leadership and trust in HE
References


References


References


