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STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT ALLIANCE WITH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: ESTABLISHING ORGANIZATIONAL SYNERGISTIC CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP

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Abstract:

The work is to assess and analyze the relationship between top institutional leadership (Presidents and its Cabinet) and information technology units by adopting new organizational cultural change and forming synergy within the organization (Ivancevich, 2019). The study adopts personal interviews with top leaders in educational institutions to identify the performance gaps among IT leadership and formulate strategies that top leadership lacks in building a partnership with information technology units. The resulting changes in leadership effectiveness and performance will lead to institutional improvement. Establishing a strategic partnership with the information technology unit will foster a new organizational culture for the institutions. It will also lead to developing unique leadership traits, values, norms, and best practices among the study participants (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Keywords: Shared Leadership; Strategic Alliance; Social Change; Synergy; Institutional Growth.

1. Introduction:

A primary cause of failed collaboration between educational institutions' leadership and information technology units is the absence of shared strategic initiates (Reiter-Palmon & Illies, 2011, p. 66). From a technological perspective, a lack of shared leadership in higher education institutions is responsible for a 20% reduction in instructional ineffectiveness and lack of students' efficacy within the institution (Waller, 2007).

The educational institution's problem is that higher education institutions face performance inefficiency due to ineffective shared leadership collaboration, resulting in decreasing students' enrollment and declining graduation rates. Here is a quote in support of the thesis:

> New leadership models recognize effective that knowledge-based environments' effectiveness depends less on a few individuals' heroic actions at the top. More is needed on collaborative leadership practices distributed throughout the institutional organization. Therefore, suggesting that a more dynamic synergetic leadership concept is critical (Markkanen & Anger-Kraav 2019).

The above quote captures how today's complex institutional environments require new forms of collaborative or shared leadership to help educational campuses become responsive to needed changes. Shared leadership is defined as moving away from the leader/follower binary, capitalizing on the importance of leaders throughout the organization, not just those in positions of authority, thereby creating an infrastructure so that organizations can benefit from multiple people's leadership. Shared leadership is different from shared governance.

Shared governance is based on faculty and administrators' principles having distinct areas of delegated authority and decision-making. Shared leadership, by contrast, is more flexible and identifies various individuals on campus with relevant expertise. It involves equal information sharing and contribution. This allows multiple perspectives rather

than those of a single decision-making body. Hence, educational leaders' issues and tools in collaboration with Information Technology leadership are novel institutional management concepts.

Among other attributes that shared leadership could make higher education more accountable to external stakeholders is that shared leadership enables institutions to create meaningful and lasting changes in the institutions' organizational structure; this often addresses external challenges (Fonstad, 2013).

1.1 The Concept of Shared Leadership and Characteristics

Shared Leadership is a management process of joint decision-making by a team of leaders or individual leaders with no monopoly of expertise in solving organizational problems. In this case, it will be a group of Technologists or Higher Education administrators who have neither the absolute competence nor the motivation to make an optimum organization's optimum decision. This process will avoid uncertainty or unpredictability of decision outcomes for the institution (Ivancevich, 2019).

Therefore, shared leadership is one of the most critical aspects of the organizational model or transformation for many organizations, including educational institutions. Employees who desire to accept more responsibility in their jobs can improve productivity within the organization by adopting shared leadership.

In conclusion, while there are various definitions of shared leadership, they all share some common characteristics, as shown below:

1. There are a greater number of individuals in leadership than traditional models of organizational functions.
2. Leaders and followers are seen as interchangeable in talents, experience, and capabilities.
3. Leadership is not based on organizational ranking or authority within the organizational chart.
4. Multiple skills perspectives, visions, and expertise are capitalized for problems solving and strategic thinking.
5. Collaboration and interactions across the chain of command are typically emphasized (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Shared leadership also recognizes the difference of leaders' talents in positions of authority. Still, it focuses on how those in the position of power can delegate authority, capitalize on expertise within the organization, and create synergistic organizational culture.

The conceptual framework supporting this paper is based on adopting the Bolman & Deal management model (Bolman & Deal, 2003) developed four viewpoints for understanding organizations. They are structural, human resource, social organization, and political climate. Bolman and Deal's structural leadership framework concentrates on change, such as position title and rank changes. Most of it is a task-based system.

The model focuses on tangible goals, roles, and responsibilities, reporting with achieved objectives and timelines (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Bolman and Deal (2003) also identified the structural framework in the following circumstances:

(a) Information technology
(b) Organizational change,
(c) Shared leadership performance,
(d) Empowerment and engagement.

As applied to this paper, shared leadership performance references observe organizational change by building a partnership between educational leadership and the information technology Unit. It focuses on shared leadership strategies, organizational change, and productivity while creating systems to increase organizational performance (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Conditions that promote and sustain shared leadership include team empowerment, supportive vertical or hierarchical leaders, autonomy, shared purpose or goal, external coaching, accountability structures, interdependence, fairness of rewards, and shared cognition.

Most institutional leadership development programs tend to focus on individuals who are already in a position of authority. Few programs are designed to cultivate a broader number of individuals and other structural frameworks to support shared leadership development in higher education.

Above all, the paper analysis/content findings contribute to top leadership performance behavior's effectiveness and how it affects the relationship with the information technology unit and the organization's productivity (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Social change communication and technologies challenges are traditional business strategic models and do change social habits. Bulut and Emin (2013) state that as new upward classes of specialized personnel emerge, some businesses evolve while others go extinct. Societal response contracts accordingly. These expectations and concerns are articulated in similar rhetoric, irrespective of technological adaptation (Quinn,1985).

2. Brief Review of Related Literature on Theories and Concepts:

It has been a growing concern that traditional approaches to leadership styles are ineffective among educational leaders. Back in the 1980s, researchers identified how Japanese companies outperformed American companies because of their ability to innovate and change flexibly by using quality management processes (Fonstad, 2013)

As an example, Management by Objective concept (MBO) was introduced and adopted globally by a corporation. It included delegating authority to employees to make changes, creating a culture that supported risk-taking, and working in cross-functional teams to manage work processes in more holistic ways (Fonstad, 2013).

1. In the subsequent years, researchers in the US explored this Management by Objectives (MBO) principles and concepts in American companies. The following decades identified the practices that make organizations more effective and leadership that supports organizational effectiveness (Fonstad, 2013).

The shared leadership concept is an aspect of a strategic initiative that is also developing a strategic implementation through shared leadership initiatives. Little information is available about how to implement and evaluate shared leadership. At a conceptual level, the idea of shared leadership seems well aligned with the concept of collegiality in educational administration. Therefore, shared leadership is not new to universities/college's leadership. But the concept has become widely recognized as a strategic tool for effectively managing the challenges that a turbulent educational environment faces (Waller, 2007). With so many theories indicating positive results of shared leadership, this paper explores what actions educational leadership (especially University's Presidents) can take to foster more shared leadership forms with the Information Technology Unit.

It is critical to document factors or conditions that promote and sustain shared leadership with IT unit. Predetermined factors includes team-empowerment, engagement; supportive vertical/hierarchical leaders, autonomy, shared purpose, IT goals, and fairness of employees' rewards and shared culture (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

2.1 Educational Strategic Formulation Differentiation:

Educational strategic formulation takes many forms, but all processes have several steps in common. Ideally, the national educational system participates together to establish the present system of education. This often proves challenging to faculty, staff, and Technologist because of their different functions/roles. For example, faculty like to develop plan but do not want to attend excessive committee meetings to finalize the plan.
In theory, a productive strategic plan key features include the following steps:

- Vision of top leadership team
- Collection of data and establishment of database (IT role)
- SWOT Analysis of the strategic plan (Entire Employees)
- Survey of stakeholder and alumni (IT role)
- Internal and External environment assessment (faculty & staff)
- Identify strategic issues (President &Cabinet)
- Working Groups and roadmap for implementation (President & Cabinet)
- Estimate of Resources and Budget (Contractor)

- Disseminate the plan (Team Effort) (Adopted from Uzarski & Broome, 2019).

The above template (Key Points) forms the basis of formulating shared leadership strategic initiatives between High Education and Information Technologist Leaders.

In fully adopting the Bolman and Deal model, the researcher realizes the limitation due to educational institutions' resource availability. Capability and capacity may also become a constrain towards institutional implementation of shared leadership between educators and technologist. But it is worth trying as a transformational change in educational management. The narrative that follows is the in-depth topical reviews of related literature in support of the study.

2.2 Igor Ansoff Conceptual Contributions to Human Development.

Igor Ansoff reemphasized the importance of an explicit process of formulating human development strategy for every firm competing in an industry. To him, this has ensured that the policies (if not the actions of managers and employees) of functional departments are coordinated and directed at some common set of goals.

To present these strategic models, Ansoff reorganized his thoughts into three parts. These parts are summarized below: -

Part 1. The general framework for analyzing the organizational structure of an industry and its competitors. The elements involved in this level of analyses are:

1. Management team, Buyers and Suppliers
2. Techniques for reading market signals
3. Game-theoretic concepts for making and responding to competitive moves
4. An approach to mapping strategic groups in an industry and their performance differences and
5. A framework for predicting industry evolution based on environmental changes.

Part 11. Development of organizational strategy, using the framework under part 1 above. This time, industry environments become important to the strategic analyst. According to Ansoff, differing environments reflect fundamental differences in industry concentration. He concluded that these different levels of environments were crucial in determining the strategic context in which a business functions, the strategic alternative available, and the common strategic errors when managing employees. Ansoff, then empirically examined fragmented industries, emerging industries, the transition to industry maturity, declining industries, and global industries, using his paradigm strategic diagnosis perspectives in both part 1 and 11 above

Part 111. Ansoff used this section of the book and journal articles to complete the analytical framework by systematically examining the important types of strategic decisions that confront firms in managing and developing employees in a single industry. This part is particularly designed by Ansoff, to assist managers when considering a particular human development strategic decision, even if the particular decision is not imminent. Part 111 can also be used as an evaluative guide for human development strategic decisions. (Ansoff & McDonnell, 1990, pp. 1–3) went on further to discuss the context in which human development is formulated. He presented a model to illustrate this process. Critical factors were:

(a) Company strengths and weaknesses
(b) Personal values of the key implementers (Key Managers and Employees)
(c) Broader societal expectations, and
(d) Industry opportunities and threats (Economic and Technical).

Ansoff and Drucker discussed these factors as "external" and internal to the company. They both concluded that criteria for validating the formulated human development strategy and called "Test of Consistency" with the following attributes – Internal consistency; Environmental fit; Resource fit Communication and Implementation, in a single functional practice of human.

2.3 The Role of Henry Mintzberg on Human Development

Mintzberg (1979) discussed analytical techniques needed for human development as theories and concepts of organizational structural analysis; this is the framework for understanding human development's fundamental forcest in an industry. For practical use, he suggested using the following models – forces driving industries' actions, environmental barriers, and employee capabilities to be used as analytical tools. The main points are as follows:

a. Diagnosing manpower needs for an organization
b. Capabilities profiles of the employees like Information Technology Experts
c. Providing resources to build the organizational structure
d. Creating an organizational framework for competitors' analysis
e. Formulating human development strategy and relationship building among leadership teams.

In general, Mintzberg took a closer look at observations and analysis of various organizations and how to tailor human development concepts to deal with the organizational environment and still be profitable as an organization or institution.

Building on the foundation of analytical techniques for formulating competitive strategy by other writers, Mintzberg concluded that "industry environments differ most strongly in their fundamental human development practices" (page 67). He further identified the environments and discussed industry structure, key employee issues, labor characteristics and skills alternatives, and human development pitfalls.

2.4 Peter F. Drucker

The corporate strategic plan was the focus of Peter Drucker. He intended to improve on the quality of customer service, industry productivity, and service delivery; and to meet the changing demands of the organizations. In order to realize this transformation, Drucker (1984) understood the value of investing in people and thus the concept of Human Resource Development. According to him, human resource development is a process of developing the intellectual capital required by organizations as well as ensuring that the right quality of people is available to meet the present and future needs of the organization being served. Management by Objectives (MBO) was one of his legendary human development concepts (Drucker, 1984). According to him, human resource development creates a balance between individual aspirations and organization needs. Individuals' needs, he added, are to establish human development policy in an organization in order to improve employees' knowledge and development through self-managed learning with appropriate support and guidance within the organization.

Drucker (1984) further added that one of the primary objectives of human resource development is the creation of a condition whereby the latent potential of employees will be realized and their commitment to the causes of the organization secured. The latent potential is taken to include the capacity to acquire and utilize new skills and knowledge and to explore a wealth of ideas (creativity) about how the organization's operations might be better served.

2.5 Peters, T.J. & Robert Waterman's Contribution on Human Development

Peters and Waterman (1982) noted that training and development have always seemed to be a means towards an end and that the end being literally to add value to organizations as a whole. This goes beyond helping organizations and individuals to achieve their goals and objectives. Those engaged in training and development within organizations should, therefore, develop a vision for both the employees and the organization. Both the stakeholders of the organization should share this vision. The concept should integrate the individual and the organization into believing that their development actually makes a difference. Trainers should therefore lead organizations into becoming "Learning Organizations" (Piereson, 1983, p. 120)

They further expressed the philosophy of learning organizations concept as an essential ingredient if organizations are to survive in these very challenging times. Learning at operational, policy, and strategic levels needs to be environmentally conscious. Management is responsible for creating a work environment in which all employees can learn continuously and productively.

2.6 Types of Human Resource Development

Ivancevich (2010) analyzed human development theories and concepts, took three forms; Employee Development, Personal Development, and Planning and Management Development. According to him, employee development policies are closely related with that aspect of human resource management, which is concerned with investing in people and developing the organization's human capital.

Ivancevich (2019) further defined Personal Development Planning as a process carried out by individuals with guidance, encouragement, and help from their CEO/managers as required. Therefore, a personal development plan sets out the actions employees propose to take to learn and develop their skills and work ethics. They take responsibility for formulating and implementing the plan and receiving support from the organization and their CEO/managers in doing so.

Their article concluded that management development is a form of human development concerned with improving the performance of managers, supervisors, and workers in their present roles and preparing them for greater responsibilities in the future. It improves employees' performance, gives them development opportunities, and provides for management succession. (Ivancevich, 2019).

3. Leadership Strategies in Information Technology (IT) Units:

According to Harold (2018), an organization has the highest chance of success when all employees work towards its goals and objectives. Because leadership entails one person having control over others, leadership quality is an essential determinant of organizational and managerial behavior. Reiter-Palmon (2011) stated that leadership within information technology must have the ability to inspire, trust and support people needed to achieve organizational goals and objectives.

The leader has more than one person to lead, the power to affect others, and the aim to accomplish. Kotter (2017) noted that managers must know how to lead and manage. Markkanen and Anger- Kraav (2019) has studied creativity and innovation and how management affects team development, handling leaders ' creative strategies and complex positions, and how their intelligence and social behaviors need to be adjusted to handle change effectively and efficiently (Patrick, 2010).

Markkanen and Anger- Kraav (2019) found that servant leadership influenced team performance through affect-based trust and psychological safety.) Markkanen and Anger- Kraav (2019) stated that in strategic servant leadership like an IT team, a higher purpose vision is set in their literature review. The leader's behavior is aligned to become a role model and ambassador to followers. In contrast, in IT operational leadership, the hierarchy is reversed, whereby the servant leader then serves and empowers employees to achieve a higher purpose (Ostrander, 2010).

4. The Research Models and Variables:

The research models showing the Independent, Intervening variables and the Dependent Variable are shown in Figure 1. It is suggested to guide the selection of the independent and dependent variables to be analyzed in the study. The selected variables also support the study's investigation of the significance of all the subjects' experience while employed in the college/university. Other factors such as IT employees' engagements, expert's opinions, and contributions to leadership skills and technology performance will be analyzed.

The paper is data and information-driven with IT's relationship in the proper use of information generated. The analysis of these existing data complements the historical data from the literature reviewed. Consistent with the research design, the secondary data analysis is analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. See the listing of the variables in the model presented (Porter,1980).

5. Conceptual Framework:

The conceptual framework for the study is reference from Bolman and Deal. Bolman and Deal (2003) developed four viewpoints for understanding organizations and leadership within the following categories - structural, human

resource, political, and symbolic. Most of it is a task-based system. The plan focuses on tangible goals, roles, and responsibilities, reporting with objectives and timelines. Bolman and Deal (2003) identified structural leadership as key concepts of developing effective results in (a) Information Technology, (b) organizational change, (c) leadership performance, (d) productivity as a catalyst for the organization's overall performance.

As applied to this study, structural leadership performance is referenced to examine organizational change by building a relationship between academic leadership and information technology that focuses on leadership strategy, cultural change, and productivity while creating systems and procedures to increase organizational performance. Figure 1 is a graphical depiction of Academic Leadership, establishing a partnership with the Information Technology Unit (IT) for Organizational Culture for Leadership Performance (See the conceptual model below).

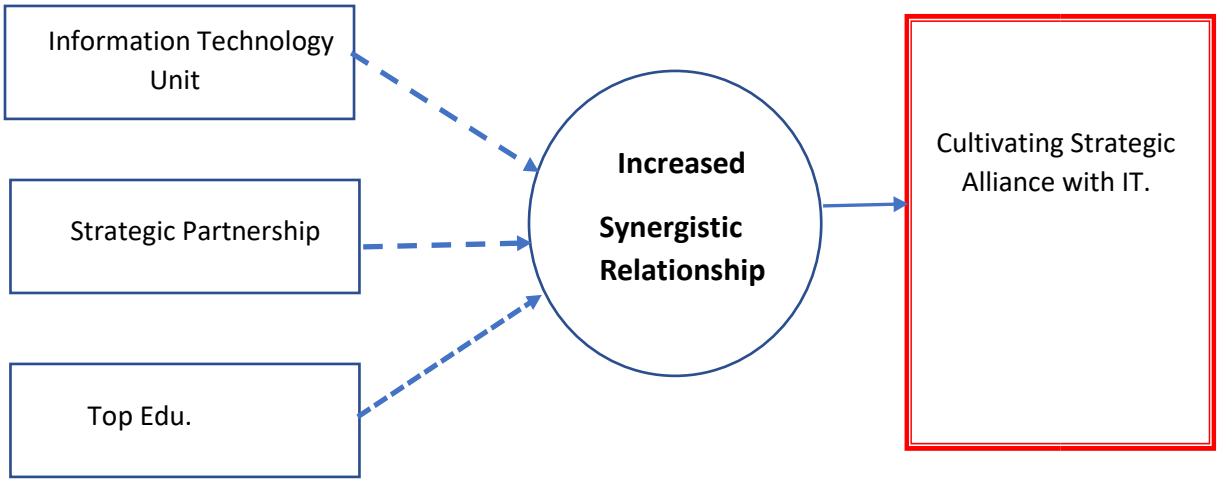

Figure 1: Graphical research model of Top Leadership Establishing a Partnership with the Information Technology Unit. (IT) for Organizational Cultural change and Leadership Performance **(**Designed by: Larita Brewster, 2021).

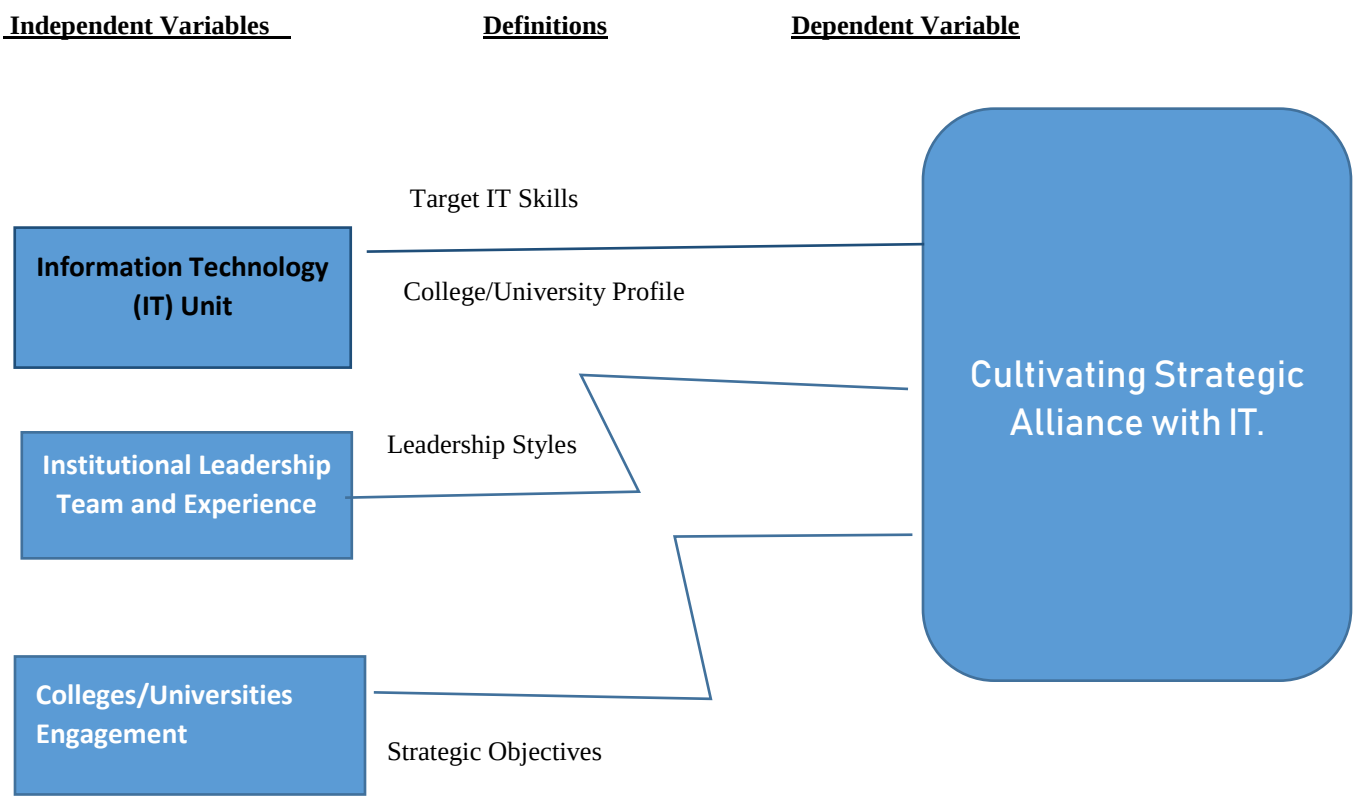

Figure 2: Research casual model of strategic alliance with Information Technology (IT)

Model Conceptualized by the Researcher, 2021.

5.1 Method of Data Collection:

In gathering data for this paper, the following procedures were established.

(a) The subjects in the study include 100 combined Institutional administrators and Information Technology Teams from four different Institutions and personal scheduled interviews with the four Colleges'/Universities' Presidents. It will be a total population size of 100 administrators picked from four Institutions. The Presidential interview is an added value to the collection of data.

Presidents' answers and responses to the interview will provide additional information that is not captured with the research questions. Above all, Presidents will validate the data and information from the literature reviewed. All respondents have been employed by the College/university and qualify as Administrators of the institution serving as subjects of the study.

(b) Since this study is based on perceptive reality (descriptive) of institutional leaders. Figure 1, above), the researchers developed 30-item questionnaires including demographic information, which serve as the instrument for the study. The instruments were screened and analyzed using a non-quantitative research method.

(c) The descriptive instrument consists of five sections. Section one consists of 10 items on demographic information of the respondents. The respondents were asked to rate the items using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from low -1 to high -5. The second section consists of 6 items on "Leadership/IT Experience while employed at the College/University, using the same scale as section one above.

Section three consists of 15 items of the same group (above #5) and Behavior." This was followed by additional 15 items on "Leadership and Positions held in the institution." The final section consists of 5 items on "Strategy," and the last section consists of 3 items on "Cultivation of Strategic Alliance." All the sections were analyzed using descriptive and judgment skills of the researchers.

(d) The specific demographic data includes "optional information." The respondents were advised that there were no right or wrong answers and that such choices are matters of one's conviction concerning Strategic goals and objectives. Such instructions are to minimize respondents' biases.

5.2 Validity and Reliability

In as much as the content validity of the instrument were adequate in experts' opinion. It can also be inferred that a reasonable level of reliability can be attained for the purposes of making inferences about the participants.

6. Concluding Statement:

The rooted conceptual concerns of technological leadership performance in this paper note that technology leaders should prioritize user needs and be prepared t This will strongly support the function of E**-learning platform** (Fonstad, 2013). Such exercise of active technological leadership skills and synergy with educational administrative leadership policies provides IT Units/Leaders needs effective management tools for non-linear development. This forms the basic tenet of Strategic Partnership.

In conclusion, the problem statement is thoroughly investigated, evaluated, and documented as an overarching goal of the conceptual framework for the paper and data analysis in bridging the gaps between IT and top leadership in selected educational institutions (Porter, 1980) This paper exploits existing literature on the topic to complement the researcher's research material in completing the paper.

The present review of related literature describes leadership as a key factor impacting IT worker's perceptions. Prescriptive leadership approaches positively influence and restrictive leadership strategies in IT Units to have a reactive (passive /aggressive) effect (Fonstad, 2013). IT needs to create a culture, especially in institutional management skills and strategies, to reinforce and sustain prescriptive leadership habits in their job performance. Such strategic skills in management will enable IT employees to maximize their technological talents and gain a competitive advantage. Finally, IT leaders can easily select non-linear approaches for IT organizational growth and sustainability through the process of Shared Leadership (Albidewi, 2014).

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