

The Development of an Intelligent Leadership Model for State Universities

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Abstract

Higher education and intelligent leadership are considered important parts of every country's education system, which could potentially play a key role in accomplishing the goals of society. In theories of leadership, new patterns attempt to view leadership through the prism of creative and intelligent phenomena. This paper aims to design and develop an intelligent leadership model for public universities. A qualitative-quantitative research method was used to design a basic model of intelligent leadership. The opinions of pundits and experts with a purposive sampling method to achieve theoretical saturation was used to design a model in the qualitative phase. During the testing of the model based on confirmatory factor analysis, data indicated that the dimensions of intelligent leadership were placed in the four components: rational leadership, emotional leadership, spiritual leadership and collective leadership and classified in sub-categories. Rational leadership was classified

into five sub-categories (strategic thinking, common targeting, planning, decision-making and monitoring and feedback); emotional leadership was classified into four sub-categories (self-awareness, self-management, motivation and social awareness); spiritual leadership was classified into seven sub-categories (vision, confidence in one's ability to achieve a goal, altruism, meaningful work, membership, organisational commitment and feedback); and finally, collective leadership was classified into the three sub-categories (communication, development of a communication network and an exchange of opinions between the leader and team). The results presented in the paper correspond with statistical logic. Finally, the test model and the Delphi technique were applied using the survey approach and the ultimate model was described, including 426 codes, 89 sub-categories and the four main categories (rational leadership, emotional leadership, spiritual leadership and collective leadership).

Keywords: intelligent leadership; rational leadership; emotional leadership; spiritual leadership; collective leadership

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Universities as social systems have been recognized as the driving force behind social awareness [Mckeown, Bates, 2013]. Universities bring in people to continue their work despite the different tensions such as the juxtaposition between universalism and nationalism, global culture and local culture, tradition and modernity, long-term and short-term plans, the need for competition and equality of opportunity, material and spiritual values. Their influence has touched upon the tension between the explosion in the population, the accumulation of knowledge, rising stakeholder expectations and the increase in competition in the educational space. In this context, universities are forced to increase their competitive advantage by constantly optimizing spending and raising the quality of education, which experts consider the key factor affecting implicit competition between countries [Tofighi et al., 2012]. Sydanmaanlakka notes that leadership is seen as a driving force for implementing the main missions of universities. The next generation of academic leaders will live in a turbulent and chaotic environment where success depends upon detecting patterns of change, measuring and capturing opportunities. In this type of environment, leaders need many competencies for their survival [Sydanmaanlakka, 2003].

Over the course of the last decade, the importance of guidance and intelligent leadership in higher education has been increasingly seen in the process of structural changes. Leaders must act amid confusion, uncertainty and instability, meanwhile the complexity of this environment will only increase. Therefore, success in the current environment requires a different way of thinking about issues, including a farseeing approach to leadership, the exchange of views and a readiness to cooperate in order to realize joint strategies [Sydanmaanlakka, 2008].

Previous studies showed that the behavior of university leaders can affect the behavior and performance of faculty members [Bass, 2010]. The importance of intelligent educational leadership and their role in the success and improvement of the university is apparent. Based on this, researchers and educational policy makers have stipulated that leadership has been the main component of university progress and improvement. The interpretation of the term, “university leadership” demonstrates its unique features that set apart from leadership at other types of organizations [Macbeath, 2003].

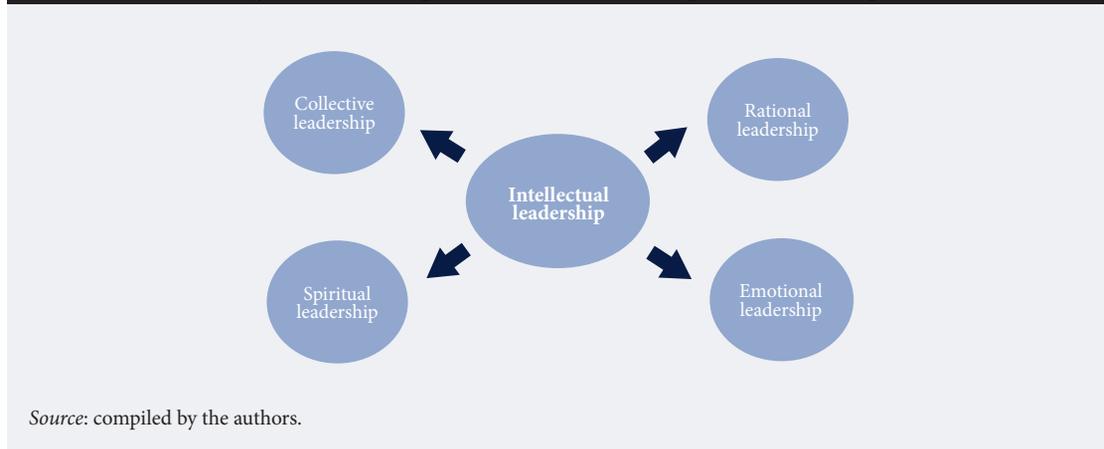
Compared to recent decades, the relevance of university leadership has notably increased. If in the past administrators had been able to move through official channels and hierarchies in order to provide effective solutions for the university, in today’s conditions, this will not guarantee success. In other words, the roles of other management teams are not sufficient in the face of new educational challenges and in this context, when facing these challenges, managers need tools such as intelligent leadership skills [Gronn, 2002a]. When assessing the traditional approach to leadership, consider the impact of the leader-follower hierarchy. In this paradigm, the leader is the organizer and guides the team members [Pearce, Conger, 2003].

Most of the literature on leadership studies was based on the aforementioned approach and in most of the relevant studies, the behaviors, skills and personal attitudes of leaders are analyzed [Bass, 2010]. As a result of the complexity, a rise in the innovation flexibility of organizations, overall the literature has begun to consider leadership as a collective and common action work and has started to move from the traditional roles to the new roles such as team building and group work [Gronn, 2002b].

One of the leading theories that researchers have begun to recently study more frequently is intelligent leadership theory. The understanding of intelligent leadership allows one to act effectively at various levels of management, from certain individuals to teams, organizations and society as whole. Intelligent leadership should help each member of a team in their comprehensive personal development and help them develop their self-sufficiency, it raises the intellectual potential of an organization and plays an active role in the creation of intellectual communities. The ultimate goal of leadership lies in the creation of a unique environment, in which economic and ethical aspects are balanced. The success of an increasing number of organizations today depends on making effective and timely decisions, which are based on sensible leadership. The ability to lead is one of the major challenges for the present and the future, because the way leaders think and the manner in which they act determines the development of the organization [Soltani, 2009].

Intelligent leadership is a constructive dialogue between leaders and followers, which facilitates bringing their efforts together to achieve a common vision. Such a process is possible if the organization supports certain corporate values and a culture formulated in an industrial and social macro-environment [Rutkauskas, Stasytyte, 2013]. The task of intelligent leadership is the creation of abilities, the generation of collective enthusiasm, the expansion of an organization’s knowledge capital. The adoption of such an approach at universities provides a balance between the current activity and planning for the future. The key qualities of leaders include the ability to negotiate and make decisions, strategic and critical thinking, the management of talent and teams with account of values, personalities and personal principles. This study has attempted to investigate the characteristics of intelligent leaders through semi-structured interviews.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Intelligent Leadership



Method

The main objective of this paper was to design and develop an intelligent leadership model for managers, faculty and staff at public universities in Zahedan, Iran. The research used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. A review of the literature facilitated the formulation of questions for the semi-structured interviews. Using this approach, the authors made an initial list of questions addressed to all respondents, during the interviews, depending on the atmosphere and progress, additional questions were posed in order to allow for the collection of more comprehensive information. The respondents included 20 employees of the State University of Sistan and Baluchestan and the Zahedan University of Medical Sciences. The interpretation of the interview results was facilitated by the use of the MAXQDA 2007 program. This permitted the development and testing of a prototype of the model for the target sample. The purposive sampling method was selected. Sampling was continued until data saturation (20 interviews were conducted). In the qualitative evaluation, Cochran's formula was used and systematic sampling, 120 persons were selected. Definition codes, which make up a single concept, were divided into classes. As a result of the classification, four basic categories were determined as well as 19 sub-categories, 89 concepts and 426 codes.

Tools for gathering information were semi-structured interviews. After reviewing the theoretical basis, interview questions were developed. With this interview method, the researcher posed the same questions to all respondents in a predetermined sequence and with the same wording. However, when doing interviews, according to the conditions and the atmosphere of the individual interviews, more questions were posed so that respondents could provide broader and more comprehensive information for the researcher. The full text of the interview was recorded, transcribed and interred in software, MAXQDA 2007. This was done so that when using of, accessing the data would be more convenient. Codes that include a common theme were placed in the same class.

Results

A qualitative analysis of the data permitted the extraction of 426 original codes. After multiple revisions and code integration at several stages, 89 concepts were formulated, which in turn were divided by 19 subcategories and 4 main categories which include: rational leadership (5 concepts), emotional leadership (4 concepts), spiritual leadership (7 concepts) and collective leadership (3 concepts) (Figure 1, Table 1).

Test Model

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was used to check the suitability of the data for factor analysis, the value of which will always fluctuate between 0 and 1. According to Table 1, for all aspects of intelligent leadership, the value of KMO is 0.7 (it should be more than 0.6), therefore, we can say that the data is suitable for factor analysis. To ensure proper data regarding the correlation matrix, which when used is not equal to zero, the Bartlett test was used. The data presented in Table 2 demonstrates the reliability of the data in the sample, because the results of the Bartlett test were statistically significant ($\text{sig} > 0.05$).

The testing of the model with the use of confirmatory factor analysis indicated the four intelligent leadership dimensions, which include rational leadership, emotional leadership, spiritual leadership

Table 1. Schematic final model of intelligent leadership at universities

Component of intellectual leadership	Elements
Rational leadership	Strategic thinking (10 indicators)
	Common targeting (4 indicators)
	Planning (9 indicators)
	Decision making (6 indicators)
	Monitoring and feedback (5 indicators)
Emotional leadership	Self-awareness (3 indicators)
	Self-management (5 indicators)
	Motivation (5 indicators)
	Social awareness (3 indicators)
Spiritual leadership	Vision (4 indicators)
	Confidence in one's ability to achieve one's goals (3 indicators)
	Altruism (5 indicators)
	Meaningful work (6 indicators)
	Membership (2 indicators)
	Organisational commitment (3 indicators)
	Feedback from leader (4 indicators)
Collective leadership	Communications (5 indicators)
	Development of a communication network (2 indicators)
	Exchange of opinions between group and leader (5 indicators)

Source: compiled by the authors.

and collective leadership. Rational leadership can be classified into 5 subcategories (strategic thinking, common targeting, planning, decision-making and monitoring and feedback); emotional leadership is divided into four sub-components (self-awareness, self-management, motivation and social awareness); spiritual leadership is classified into 7 sub-categories (vision, confidence in one's ability to achieve a goal, altruism, meaningful work, membership, organizational commitment and feedback); collective leadership is classified into 3 sub-categories (communications, development of the communications network and the exchange of opinions between the leader and the group) (see details in Table 3).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The confirmatory factor analysis of each of the study variables was obtained individually using LISREL software (Table 4). In order to reduce the number of study variables and consider them latent, the value of the obtained factor load should be greater than 0.3.

The results of Table 4 shows the appropriateness of the indices because according to the LISREL output, the Chi-square divided by the degree of freedom is equal to a number less than 3, and the RMSE is within the acceptable range (The allowed limit is 0.08).

The Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used to determine the normal status of the study variables including rational leadership, emotional leadership, spiritual leadership and collective leadership. Its results showed that the level of significance of all variables in accordance with the above table is larger than 0.05. The Friedman test was used to rank the components of intelligent leadership. The results showed that the average ranking of spiritual leadership is (3.85), rational leadership is (3.11), emotional leadership is (2.02) and collective leadership is (1.01). These results are due to the fact that in Iran universities are Islamic universities with a national and religious approach.

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's test results

The name of component (hidden variable)	Summary symbol	The results of KMO	Bartlett test results
Rational leadership	RL	0.91	0.001
Emotional leadership	EL	0.89	0.001
Spiritual leadership	SL	0.90	0.001
Collective leadership	CL	0.92	0.001

Source: compiled by the authors.

Table 3. Observed variables that characterize the various components of leadership and its indicators

Observed variable	Concepts	Number of codes
Rational leadership		
Strategic thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of environment related to leadership activity • Understanding the market • Recognition of customers • System, hierarchy, and people • Knowledge of products, services and technologies associated with the university • Awareness of financial affairs and credits • Creation of the motivating insight • Occupation is defined as a critical and permanent mission • Development of strategies with an emphasis on synergy • Successful tactical development 	42
Common targeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The beginning of comprehensive leadership and creation of common goals • Create practical plans • Setting goals based on the needs of the university • Trying to achieve the university's goals 	24
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition and determining strategies, prospects, purposes/missions, goals, policies, tactics/techniques, regulations, rules, programs, and budget 	26
Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data-based decision making • Having reliable courage • Rational decision making by combining intellect and intuition • Understanding organisational culture • Understanding the structure of power and hierarchy at the university for better decision making • Identification of the factors involved in decision making 	33
Monitoring and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determination of the criteria and methods for measuring activity • Monitoring performance and activities • Comparing the results of the performance measurement with criteria and goals • Action to modify or change function • Appropriate feedback on performance of individuals 	11
Emotional leadership		
Consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding your feelings • Emotional intelligence • Self-esteem 	29
Self-awareness management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-control • Reliability • Conscientiousness • Adaptability (ability to change one's leadership model) • Innovation 	34
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating motivation to achieve the goal • Tendency toward progression • Commitment • Initiative • Optimism 	16
Social empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and awareness of the needs and feelings of employees • Understanding the needs for staff development and concern for them (organisational knowledge) • Service-oriented or service 	58
Spiritual leadership		
Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foresight • Identifying the functions of the university • Identifying the nature of the university • Create/select outlook 	31
Confidence in one's ability to achieve goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an internal stimulus for oneself and one's employees • Doing one's duty • Responsibility 	10
Altruism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust • Loyalty • Forgiveness • Reception • Appreciation 	19

Table 3 continued

Meaningful work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for purpose and meaning in working life • Competence and skills • Commitment • Enthusiasm • The creation and provision of service • Value-based activity 	18
Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratitude for membership in the organisation • Social interaction 	10
Organisational Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional commitment • Continuous commitment • Normative commitment 	14
Feedback from leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unofficial observation of performance • Official visits • Feedback • Continuous improvement 	11
Collective leadership		
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating common points • Exchanging opinions • Sharing information • Establishing communication standards • Right to be heard (encouraging employees to express ideas) 	18
Development of communication network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging interaction • Communication relating to educational activity 	10
Exchange of opinions between the leader and the team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations • Delegating responsibilities • Using the experience and expertise of individuals • Empowerment • Shared leadership 	12

Source: compiled by the authors.

In accordance with the Friedman test, the ranking of components of rational leadership at public universities of Zahedan showed that strategic thinking has first place and common targeting has fifth place (Table 5). This demonstrates the importance of goal setting and its role in the success of academic programs. Given that the new management approach is based on objectives, it is better that the university directors pay attention to this.

As regards the ranking of the components of emotional leadership at public universities of Zahedan, self-management holds first place and motivation, social awareness and self-awareness follow (Table 6). The results revealed that the most significant characteristics of emotional leadership at universities are the creation of trust, loyalty, a readiness to exchange ideas and further, the creation of motivation and the understanding of social issues and the needs of employees.

Among the seven characteristics of spiritual leadership at universities, organizational commitment held first place and meaningful work held seventh place (Table 7). Based on this, university directors need to focus on increasing employees' loyalty to the organization, set targets for the organization, create a strategic vision, expand altruism, provide for the meaning in one's work, give feedback to employees, and imbue a sense of belonging in the employees regarding the organization.

The data in Table 8 demonstrate that in the era of communications, in order to succeed, university directors must devote a great amount of attention to the exchange of opinions between the leader and the team, the alignment of communications networks and feedback.

Table 4. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis

The name of component (hidden variable)	Chi-square	Degree of freedom	Chi-square ratio	P-value	RMSEA
Rational leadership	548.81	188	2.91	0.000	0.079
Emotional leadership	311.67	134	2.32	0.000	0.042
Spiritual leadership	618.97	228	2.71	0.000	0.061
Collective leadership	194.85	65	2.99	0.000	0.056

Source: compiled by the authors.

Table 5. Ranking components of rational leadership

Row	Variable	Average ranking	Rank
1	Strategic thinking	4.98	1
2	Common targeting	1.03	5
3	Planning	2.04	4
4	Decision making	3.94	2
5	Monitoring and feedback	3	3
Sig=0.000	X ² =464.40	df=4	N=120

Source: compiled by the authors.

Table 6. Ranking components of emotional leadership

Row	Variable	Rank	Average ranking
1	Self-awareness	4	1.30
2	Self-management	1	4.02
3	Motivation	2	3.50
4	Social awareness	3	3.32
N=120	X ² =238.06	N=120	df=3

Source: compiled by the authors.

Findings

Given that the significance of all study variables in this study did not exceed 0.05, this permitted the formulation of four hypotheses, which were characterized by the connections between the components and intelligent leadership (Table 9). Among the main variables of study (which served as the basis for the hypotheses), the most significant was the relationship between spiritual leadership and intelligent leadership (with an impact factor of 0.32 and factor of significance of 0.000) (Figure 2). University directors should consider this a priority. The size of significance between intelligent leadership and rational, emotional and collective leadership amounts to 0.26, 0.25 and 0.18, respectively; the level of significance in all cases was 0.000. Given that the impact of collective leadership and intelligent leadership is the smallest, such is indicative of poor communication and a lack of attention to communication skills when considering a leader's success, which must also be considered.

The structural pattern seen in Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between the studied variables; for example, the size of the connection between spiritual and intelligent leadership is equal to 0.32. Coefficients of significance were used in order to confirm or refute the research hypotheses. Given that the factor of significance for all components of intelligent leadership (rational, emotional, spiritual and collective) were equal to 0.000, the hypothesis was confirmed.

Discussion

Global competition and rising community expectations demand new management approaches [Ardalan et al, 2013]. Intelligent leadership has recently become one such approach [Noralizadeh, Hajivand, 2008]. Intelligent leadership consists of four components: rational, emotional, spiritual and collective.

The rational dimension of intelligent leadership is considered a style of management in which managers from all levels jointly define the organization's goals and set limits on the responsibilities and duties of

Table 7. Ranking components of spiritual leadership

Row	Variable	Rank	Rank mean
1	Perspective	3	5.12
2	Confidence in one's ability to achieve goals	2	5.32
3	Altruism	4	4.37
4	Meaningful work	7	1.16
5	Membership	6	2.43
6	Organisational commitment	1	6.68
7	Leader performance feedback	5	2.91
Sig =0.001	X ² =238.06	N=120	df=6

Source: compiled by the authors.

Table 8. Ranking components of collective leadership

Row	Variable	Rank	Rank mean
1	Communications	1	2.56
2	Development of communications network	3	1.08
3	Exchange of opinions between the leader and team	2	2.36
Sig =0.000	X ² =179.01	N=120	df=2

Source: compiled by the authors.

each person taking the expected results into account. Emotional leadership includes the management of feelings and emotions, accounting for all aspects of life of the individual and the organization's relationship with him or her as a valuable resource of the organization. The leader's ability to inspire enthusiasm and direct it towards problem solving is crucial for performance. Spiritual leadership brings work meaning and purpose, it provides employees with strength and energy, it prevents job exhaustion and vanity. The leader uses value-based approaches and models of behavior, both conditioned by his or her own motivations and those of the team members, which provides for the spiritual survival of all members. It therefore enables employees to develop a personal and professional understanding of the needs of all as a basis for agreement. The development of communication networks between the leader and the followers facilitates the bringing together of efforts, the leadership role is divided between the employees and the director, which guarantees the success of said leadership. Sydanmaanlakka [Sydanmaanlakka, 2008] stated that intelligent leadership is a constructive dialogue between leaders and followers on concrete issues, so that they are able to jointly achieve a common vision. The leader fosters the collective wisdom of the group and increases the commitment of his or her employees to the job.

The findings of our research are confirmed by the work of [Cox *et al.*, 2003]. Intelligent leadership opens the space for collaboration, consultations and cooperation among faculty members and makes them more tightly linked with the organization by integrating behavioral and professional skills into a single base of knowledge and abilities. In addition, Locke [Locke, 2000] states that wise leaders will grapple with uncovering the creative and innovative potential of their subordinates, these leaders will push them to critically evaluate assumptions, put forward new frameworks for questions and find new ways of solving problems. According to [Bligh, Meindl, 2004], conscientious refocusing plays an important role: this is when a director subordinates his or her own goals to those of the organization. In its turn, the emotional component of intelligent leadership is called upon to change the organizational culture in such a way that the opinions of all are taken into consideration. Meanwhile, employees gain the motivation to achieve both individual and collective goals. Furthermore Cohen [Cohen, 2003] asserts that the director, who claims emotional leadership, should be aware of how his or her behavior and mood impacts those around him or her. These leaders must know their emotions, understand the feelings of others and correctly evaluate the emotional climate of his or her organization. The spiritual aspect lies in the creation of such an influence, thanks to which, work is imbued with meaning for all [Fletcher, Käufer, 2003]. Spiritual leadership emphasizes the spiritual needs of all team members, increases commitment to the organization, raises the effectiveness of group work, and the employees strive to improve their work and share altruistic values.

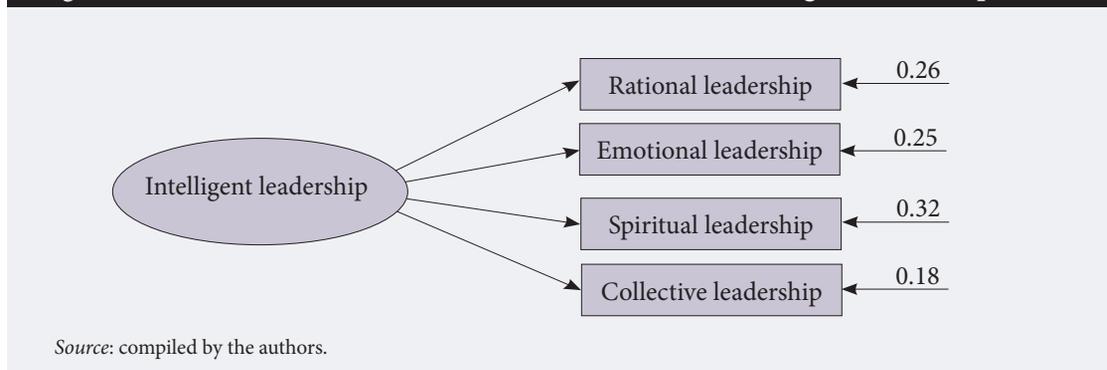
Finally, collective leadership is aimed at the development of professional and independent teams, increasing the spirit of teamwork. It allows for launching effective communication, developing communications networks and an exchange of opinions between the leader and working groups [Pearce, Manz, 2005].

Table 9. Results of direct effects and significant coefficients of the final model hypotheses

Row	Hypotheses	Correlation	Impact	Sig	Approved / denied
1	There is a significant relationship between rational leadership and intelligent leadership	0.96	0.269	0.001	Approved
2	There is a significant relationship between emotional leadership and intelligent leadership	0.95	0.251	0.001	Approved
3	There is a significant relationship between spiritual leadership and intelligent leadership	0.97	0.329	0.001	Approved
4	There is a significant relationship between collective leadership and intelligent leadership	0.93	0.187	0.001	Approved

Source: compiled by the authors.

Figure 2. The final structure in the standard estimate of intelligent leadership model



Accordingly, intelligent leadership focuses on the achievement of goals, the management of emotions and feelings, the search for meaning and the development of the spirit of teamwork, which can be effective in expanding the scale of activity at a university, and provide for its comprehensive development. The participation of the teaching staff in the creation of a motivation statement and in the setting of goals helps directors outline a shared vision.

It may be concluded that university directors need to provide a reliable foundation for their organizational status and improve the organization's standing in the eyes of its employees, which supports a holistic emotional climate, involving them in the organization's objectives. Spiritual leadership includes the identification of significant factors in the working process, finding meaning, the creation of conditions that allow teachers to find meaning in their work at universities. In addition, it is necessary to identify job trends related to the significance of work and plan preventative measures. Given that the recognition of the importance of an activity impacts its results, it is necessary to cultivate values that imbue meaning in the work of universities. As concerns collective leadership, there needs to be autonomous and self-managed teams at universities, the work of which may be done more effectively through the delegation of tasks earlier performed only by certain employees.

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