Higher Education Leadership: Professionalism in Finnish Higher education in departmental level

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ABSTRACT

Mohsen Nasrolahi. 2018. Higher Education Leadership: Professionalism in Finnish Higher education at departmental level. University of Jyväskylä, Department of Education and Psychology.

Achieving a highly quality educational system without taking the issue of leadership into consideration would be unattainable. Academic leadership has gained more attention during the past few decades and considered as one of the essential factors in the success of any educational institution. Finland, as one of the most leading countries in the field of education, is regarded as an example of a successful school leadership system.

However, the purpose of this research is to study Finnish academic leadership and reveal how academic leaders in Finland manage to end up with leadership positions. The question that this research explores is to what extent academic leaders in Finland are specialized and trained for leadership posts. The impacts of leadership expertise and its absence are also examined in this research.

In order to collect the required data, eight departments in two Finnish universities were selected, and the administrative head of each department was interviewed. In this qualitative study, the data was analysed using a content analysis approach.

The data from the semi-structured interviews provide insight into academic leadership sphere in Finnish higher education institutions. The findings from this study highlight the significance of training higher education leaders and points to the challenges resulting from a lack of expertise and training.

Keywords: Academic leadership, Leadership expertise, Training, Finland

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

There is no denying the fact that the popularity of higher education is growing among people in societies and no one can neglect its impacts on individual and social growth. Higher education is believed to have a strong impact on people's awareness concerning global issues and challenges including sustainability, climate change, human conflict, poverty, etc. With the growing notion of 'knowledge society', knowledge and the production of knowledge have been considered important features to describe relationships among people's lives, societies, organizations and industrial outputs (Välimaa & Hoffman, 2007). Higher education institutions are known as knowledge-based organizations which are famous for generating knowledge, raising awareness, and career advancement. By considering the importance of higher education and its role in society, we can realize how important it is to lead such organizations in the most efficient way.

Academic leadership has appeared to become a frequent topic when the issue of higher education is addressed during the past decades (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998, 1999; Knight & Trowler, 2001; Mead, Morgan & Heath, 1999; Ramsden, 1998). As Wang & Berger (2010) state effective leadership leads to changes in a society or higher education without which these organizations are doomed to failure. In other words, leadership is the guiding principle for any organization's success. Leaders in organizations are expected to determine a shared vision and set directions and roadmaps for their followers (Wang & Berger, 2010). Despite all the emphasis placed on the significance of academic leadership, universities appear to be encountering an abundance of challenges in this regard. As compared to corporate leadership, academic leadership has not sufficiently progressed, and it is not yet regarded as professional as its counterpart in the corporate world. As said by Gmelch (2002), there is this fear that academic leadership still remains in the Dark Ages. One of the major challenges which can be seen in higher education leadership is the fact that leadership skills and expertise are not regarded as critical criteria for the selection of leaders.

Through the observation of the Finnish education system, the author is of the opinion that Finnish higher education is dealing with some shortcomings in academic leadership. Contrary to elementary and secondary education in which Finland is doing extraordinarily well in most aspects including leadership, it was argued in the LEAD workshop taking place at Tampere University that there are unresolved leadership dilemmas in Finnish higher education leadership including the professionalism of academic leaders (Nasrolahi, Personal communication May 2016). For instance, Professor Seppo Hölttä, one of the lecturers in the LEAD workshop, named some shortcomings of Finnish academic leadership including the issues of professionalism in higher education leadership, internationalization of Finnish universities, funding system, etc. The research questions were devised based on this hunch that little attention is given to leadership expertise regarding the selection of candidates for management posts at the universities of Finland.

Therefore, the author decided to focus on department heads as mid-level managers at two universities of Finland and came up with this overarching research question; **to what extent academic leaders in departmental level are specialized in the field of leadership in Finnish higher education?** As a result of this study, the author would like to find out whether or not department heads at the chosen universities believe they possess the appropriate management qualifications or leadership expertise. He also would like to understand if the selected department heads have ever gone through any formal leadership programs before or during their tenure.

The aim of this study is to shine new light on the issue of professionalism regarding academic leadership within the context of Finish universities. In this research department headship is the focal point and the effects of formal leadership training or lack of leadership training on academic leaders are investigated through digging into the experiences of department heads. The author is also interested in discovering whether or not adequate leadership training is available for department heads.

The overall structure of the study takes the form of five chapters, including this introductory chapter. Following the introduction, chapter 2 presents detailed

literature and theoretical background on both leadership, in general, and academic leadership, in specific. This section gives an insight into the differences and similarities between leadership and management. In this chapter, the author focuses on issues concerning academic leadership such as the importance of higher education leadership, challenges in the selection of academic leaders, and the importance of training department heads as mid-level leaders. In Chapter 3, the implementation of the research, the employed methodology of the study, the approach to analyse data, and ethical solutions are explained. Chapter 4 presents the research findings on the importance of academic leadership training, challenges of the department heads, lack of incentive, and recommendations in this regard. The research findings are elaborated and discussed in details and based on the limited number of participants, efforts are made to study mid-level management in few departments at two Finnish universities and some of the challenges Finnish department heads encounter. The final chapter wraps up the research, discussing and interpreting the findings related to Finnish academic leadership and suggesting for future research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Leadership and management

Leadership and management are the terms commonly viewed as interchangeable. Despite the existing differences regarding their meaning, definitions, functions, and usage, both are often confused with each other and utilized interchangeably (Selznick, 1957; Nicholls, 2002; Hodgkinson, 1983; Jaques & Clement, 1994). Reviewing the literature concerning the issues of leadership and management suggests that each has its meaning, functions, and usage. As Rost (1993) mentions in his book *Leadership for the Twenty-first Century*, once we concur with the idea that leadership and management are the same and synonymous, it is as

though we believe apples and oranges are the same. However, the two concepts are different in many aspects; they are complementary when it comes to action (Ngaajieh Nnane, R., 2009). It is apparent that for the success of any organization, both leadership and management go hand in hand and one without the presence of the other will lead to failure in that organization. To better grasp the distinctions between leadership and management, one ought to probe into the definitions, functions, and characteristics of each. In order for better recognition of each term and their existing distinctions in related literature, efforts are made to concentrate separately on each of the terms, and then a comparison is made to highlight the possible similarities and differences.

2.1.1 Leadership

"Leadership is an ageless topic" (Kotter 2008, p.3). There is an abundance of definitions for the term "Leadership" in different literature. According to LeDoux (1994), in order for the human mind to better understand things, it tries to define and label them; this is why here some of the definitions of leadership are presented. Many scholars have come up with various definitions for leadership which cover different aspects of it. Leadership, in general, is a process through which a leader can influence others in order to achieve a common target (Northhouse, 2007). Additionally, not only can a leader have a positive impact on others to move towards the goal, but also he or she can help others to understand the necessity of the goal and ways to accomplish it. As Yukl states "Leadership is a process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives" (2010, p. 8). Another interesting definition of leadership mentioned by Hart (1980) emphasizes on positively influencing followers to strive for achieving goals of an organization. Montor et al. (1987) also stress the importance of followers' eagerness; they assert that leadership is a means through which leaders can influence their followers to enthusiastically attempt to achieve a communal target. The definitions for attain-

ing organizational objectives are quite typical in the literature regarding leadership. Leadership means "the activities of influencing people to strive willingly for group goals" (Smith, Mazzarella, and Piele, 1981, p. 5). Sergiovanni (1984) also points out acquiring objectives in an efficient and effective way is the overall goal of leadership. Some other definitions address the social aspects of leadership. Foster (1989) views leadership a social phenomenon which takes place among people pursuing a social objective. "Leadership is and must be socially critical, it does not reside in an individual but in the relationship between individuals, and it is oriented towards social vision and change, not simply, or only, organizational goals" (p. 46).

Observing the definitions of leadership mentioned by scholars in different literature can help comprehend a core concept of leadership. Leadership is mainly considered a motive and influence on individuals to pursue communal targets and try to achieve them eagerly; in simple worlds, leaders with their inspirational and influential power can direct and guide individuals and make them move towards the shared goals set to reach organizational prosperity. Leaders ought to have the ability to guide and mobilize people to accomplish goals which are beyond reach for others. An interesting definition of leadership mentioned by Cronin (1980) explains that: "Leadership is generally defined as the capacity to make things happen that would otherwise not happen" (p. 372).

2.1.2 Management

Management is believed to come into existence in order to meet the needs of the industrial developments of the twentieth century (Kotter, 2008). As Kotter (2008) stated, "management is the product of the 100 years" (p. 3). Once industries and organizations began growing more extensive and more complicated, this concern started to grow that these organizations might plunge into chaos. For this reason, the necessity of a system to organize work and tackle the issues of authority and control was introduced as an urgent subject (Kotterman, 2006).

In fact, by the introduction of order and consistency, management tends to apply authority to create regulated and systematic organizations to attain the desired and planned goals in the most efficient way possible.

Management mainly involves continuous planning, arranging, monitoring, and controlling resources to reach organizational targets (Nebeker and Tatum, 2002). What managers are most concerned about is the final products delivered to customers. To ensure products are of high quality, managers plan and design appropriate organizational structure, quality measurement, controlling system, etc. In other words, managers deploy management strategies and systems, together with their authority in order to reach the organizational defined goals and products which, consequently, meet customers' satisfaction. One distinct difference between managers and leaders can be viewed in their vision. Contrary to leaders, managers attempt to ensure all instructions, processes, controlling and monitoring activities are performed so well that they can guarantee customers qualified products. In simple words, managers are more involved with planning, designing, monitoring, and controlling to accomplish the organization's short-term goals. On the other hand, leaders tend to think more long-term and plan for the organization's farther future perspectives (Kotterman, 2006).

2.1.3 Leadership vs. Management

As mentioned before, there has been a serious debate on the issues of leadership and management among researchers, scholars and academic figures for quite a long time; two terms which are sometimes interchangeably deployed and regarded as the same. However, some scholars consider similarities for both leadership and management in terms of definition, function, and usage, and some other are of this conviction that there are distinct differences between these two terms. Terry (1993) stated that when taking polls at panel discussions about the issue of leadership, one-third of the population concurred with the idea that distinct differences do exist between leadership and management, yet two-thirds were for the idea that these two often overlap each other.

According to the definitions given before on leadership and management, it can be mentioned that while leadership is more of influencing and inspiring individuals to reach shared targets, management, to achieve the objectives of the organization, mainly deploys authority to make individuals follow the organizational instructions, structure, and processes. Kotter (2008) points out a handful of differences between leadership and management in his book, *Force for Change: How Leadership Differs from Management*. He believes that while management concentrates on short-term and more detailed perspectives, leadership focuses on more distant future and a broader picture of the organization. He also asserted that despite management which looks into people's expertise and specialization for employment, leadership tends to integrate the group and ensure individuals are aligned with the organization's objectives. A very interesting comparison between leadership and management on their functions is made by Kotter (2008, p. 6), which is presented in the following chart.

	Management	Leadership
"Creating an agenda	Planning and Budgeting	Establishing Direction
Developing a human network for achieving the agenda	Organizing and Staffing	Aligning People
Execution	Controlling and Problem-solving	Motivating and Inspiring
Outcomes	Produce a degree of predictability and order, and has the potential of consistently producing key results expected by various stakeholders	Produce change, often to a dramatic degree, and has the potential of producing extremely useful change"

As it can be seen from the exhibit, whereas management deals with planning for goal achievements and allocating proper and calculated budget for the success of the organization, leadership attempts to set directions for followers in order to give them insight for the attainment of more long-term plans. For the success of the organization, managers mainly take the responsibility of recruiting highly qualified staff and designating them jobs to do grounded on organizational objectives. Leaders, on the other hand, are more concerned with lining up followers and making sure the established directions for people are in accord with the ultimate goals of the organization. As opposed to management which concentrates on problem-solving strategies and screening the processes and jobs done by staff, leadership, to accomplish its organizational purposes, deploys motivation as an instrument to mobilize and energize the followers. Management strategies, in a nutshell, culminates in an expected and predictable product which meets customers' satisfaction. Leadership, ultimately, contributes to a change helping followers broaden their organizational vision and be more committed to accomplishing goals.

The type of relationship between "leaders and followers, managers and subordinates" (Rost, 1993, p. 150) is another notable difference between leadership and management. As the terms "leader and manager" are not the same, "follower and subordinate", too, are different in terms of definition and function. Whereas management concentrates on a top-down approach using authority to accomplish the expected and desired product, which meets the optimal organizational standards and is most satisfactory to customers and stakeholders, leaders work in parallel with followers creating sympathy and movement in order to reach the shared target and change. Unlike the hierarchical relationship between managers and subordinates, which is based on order and authority, leadership is a role attributed to a leader according to individuals' value judgments (Sajid Ali, 2004). In other words, the legitimacy of leadership is embedded in followers' acceptance and their company towards reaching goals; yet, managers enjoy their authority emanating from their position to make subordinates stick to their allocated tasks.

Another area where leadership and management diverge is the issue of creativity and innovation. Management, in a sense, is a creativity killer because management tends to maintain structures, control organizations by assigning regulated and defined roles and tasks, and strong monitoring process to keep staff from deviation (Barker, 1997). As opposed to management, leadership is associated with change; change, in essence, is involved with unpredictability and uncertainty. Uncertainty often paves the way for individuals to come up with new and creative ideas to tackle the existing problems (Sajid Ali, 2004). It should also be pointed out that not all organizations need periodic changes and management of change is the issue to be thought of. Because the variable time lag leads to chaos which can harm an organization.

With all being mentioned earlier, it is of high importance to reiterate that leadership and management are distinct in some different aspects, but complementary in action. Not only do some scholars not suffice to count the differences between leadership and management, they even consider differences between leadership and leader, and management and manager. According to Rost (1993) ignoring the differences between leadership and leader, and management and manager is "confusing a process with a person" (p. 134). Sajid Ali (2004) asserted that "This distinction is important because just like every act of an actor is not acting, similarly, every act of a leader is not leadership and the same holds for management (p. 14). Despite all these distinctions made in an abundance of literature related to leadership and management, some scholars would rather get rid of all these confusions and indicate that these two terms can be close and even overlap each other.

2.2   Importance of higher education leadership

As discussed in the previous section on leadership and management, goal achievement of an organization strongly relies on these two elements. As clarified earlier, leadership and management are complementary, and they go hand in hand in the process of accomplishing organizational goals; It is in such a way that one cannot guarantee and contribute to the success of an organization while the other one is absent. However, Bennis and Nanus (1985) define management as "doing things right" and leadership as "doing the right things," Leithwood (2004) dissents from these separated definitions and believes that a successful leader attempts to "do right things right" (P. 2). Management, due to its capacity to plan, organize, monitor, and produce, has found a special place among industrial businesses in 21st century while leadership serves as a heart pumping motivation and enthusiasm to the vessels of organizations to not only move towards organizational goals but bring about dramatic changes in terms of organizational prospects.

University, as one of the most influential social institutions, is believed to take responsibility of leading society towards prosperity and make changes in society when necessary. To reach these objectives, effective leadership needs to be considered as one of the most ultimate issues in higher education. As stated by Wang (2010), the prosperity or failure of a society is associated with its leadership. Effective leadership can help academia accomplish its objectives regarding science development, sustainable development, social and cultural improvement, etc. Since these objectives are long-term and to accomplish them directions must be clearly set, people ought to be inspired to follow, and fundamental changes should be implemented, management per se cannot lead an organization to its ultimate goals. Academic leadership, according to Gmelch, (2002), can firstly unify followers, secondly set directions for the group and assign individuals tasks to perform, and finally give them the power to freely work to reach their objectives.

The question which arises here is what makes academic leadership an indispensable part of academia and what are the impacts of academic leadership on the growth of academia? A lot has been said about academic leadership and

its effects on any educational institutions. It is a common belief that effective leaders lead successful universities. Academic leadership is very difficult to pin down since university is a multi-dimensional organization with multiple responsibilities and targets in relation to academia itself, society, and even the world. As Leithwood, & Riehl, C. (2003) stated although it might be difficult to determine the effects of good leadership, it is easy to see the impacts of poor leadership. However, it is hard to point out all the effects of academic leadership, the author attempts to count some of its significant effects existing in different literature.

2.2.1   Academic leadership impacts on students learning

Students' improvement is profoundly linked to quality education. Quality education is the result of a well-planned curriculum, teaching system, well-trained staff, and high-quality instruction, to mention but a few. Effective leaders are believed to be those who can establish such conditions to help students succeed in their studies. However, there are controversies among scholars surrounding academic leadership and its effects on students' outcome. Some scholars including Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, & Wisenbaker, 1979; Rutter, Maugham, Mortimore, Ouston, & Smith, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Levine and Lezotte 1990; Sammons, Hillman, and Mortimore 1995; Bredeson 1996; are of the conviction that educational leadership exercises both positive direct and indirect influence on school climate and students' success (Witziers, Bosker, & Krüger, 2003). Some other scholars, on the other hand, believe not reliable and robust proof can be inferred from the existing literature concerning the effects of academic leadership on student achievement. For instance, Murphy (1988) asserted that since there is not adequate research carried out in this area and the findings are not qualified and reliable enough, it is difficult to prove that educational leadership plays a big part in student achievement. Similarly, Hallinger and Heck (1996) mentioned that "despite the traditional rhetoric concerning principal effects, the actual results of empirical studies in the U.S. and U.K.

are not altogether consistent in size or direction" (P. 1). In this part of the literature review, we attempt to figure out to what extent academic leadership influences school climate and student accomplishment.

Since students are considered the primary stakeholders of academia, meeting their expectations and satisfaction can be noted as the most crucial mission of university. Balcı (2001) asserted that students' development is the indicator of school's effectiveness. Clark, lotto, and Astuto (1984) also believed that an effective academic institute is measured by the skills students obtain, the success they accomplish, the culture and learning objectives the university sets, and its successful academic leadership. Similarly, Hoy and Ferguson (1985) have identified some dimensions to describe the organizational effectiveness of university. They mentioned that organizational effectiveness of university relies on students' accomplishment, the way teachers are effectively managed, the overall satisfaction of university, and its effective academic leadership. Besides, Gun and Holdaway (1986) consider students' and teachers' satisfaction as the most important token of school's effectiveness.

Reviewing literature on the relationship between school leadership and student learning, one can figure out that there is a lot being mentioned in this regard. For instance, Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) claimed that "School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning" (P. 27). Some scholars believed that leaders have a substantial impact on developing school's curriculum, creating instructions, and setting directions; therefore, they directly influence teachers and teaching approaches; teachers, on the other hand, are considered the most influential people in students' success (Southwell, & Morgan, 2009). Southwell, & Morgan, (2009) mentioned that as compared to the effects of teachers on student learning, educational leaders have an indirect and less influence on pupil learning. Regarding the impacts of educational leaders on student learning, Leithwood et al. (2004) asserted that the impacts of leadership on student learning encompass one-fourth of the whole school effects. Scholars who are in favour of positive impacts of leadership on students' outcome claim

that leaders can mainly influence student achievement indirectly through continuous curriculum development, direction setting, internal and external management, etc. According to Gibbs et al. (2006), constant curriculum development is a task by which academic leaders can improve students' outcomes.

2.2.2   Academic leadership impacts on faculty

Setting directions, creating motivation and exercising influence, as mentioned earlier, are the main functions existing in most literature on leadership. Effective leaders do not tend to enforce instructions on followers; instead, they attempt to serve as a compass showing directions and create a sense of cooperation and camaraderie among followers in order to accomplish the shared objectives. It is evident that once the direction is set, all members on a team will know where they are heading for and for what reason they are striving. Therefore, each member attempts to conform to the group's objectives and put their talents and abilities at the service of the team. To create such uniformity in an organization, leaders have no way but exerting great influence on individuals in order to understand that everyone's success and prosperity is profoundly associated with the team's integrity and unity. Motivation, as another essential leadership instrument, acts as a catalyst for creating such positive feelings among individuals and make them move towards shared goals; that is what effective leaders do. John Quincy Adams beautifully describes a leader: "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader".

Leithwood & Riehl, (2003) point out three important characteristics of leadership in any organizations: direction setting, people development, and organizational development. Some of the effects of academic leadership mentioned by Leithwood & Riehl, (2003) are reviewed here. They believe direction setting can create actions which contribute to the ultimate organizational objectives.

- "Identifying and articulating a vision" (P. 3). Effective academic leaders help staff identify organizational targets and broaden their vision to accomplish established educational goals.

- "Creating shared meanings" (P. 3). To help individuals conform to the vision of an organization, effective leaders ought to establish shared meanings and understandings of the reasons why the organization pursuing particular objectives. Once staff understand what they are pursuing and for what reason they are doing that, they feel more committed to the organizational visions. For instance, by engaging staff in goal setting process, academic leaders can underscore the importance of educational objectives and the extent to which every individual can contribute to the growth of student learning and schooling, which is, with no doubt, the focal part of every educational institution. When individuals find themselves part of a meaningful and purposeful organization, they more willingly engage and feel committed to what they are doing.

- "Creating high-performance expectations" (P. 4). Effective leadership can convey expectations in order to mobilize followers. By effective introduction of these expectations, leaders help followers notice the gap between what is being done and what is expected to be achieved.

- "Communicating" (P. 4). Successful academic leaders consider the vision of academia and attempt to persuasively and productively communicate it with staff. Establishing this communicative approach in educational institutions can result in productive discourse among staff and effective decision-making strategies.

Researchers, teachers, and students make most academic accomplishments. Development of human resource, as the most significant assets of a university, can help and foster the growth of academia. Effective educational leaders can influence staff in many different respects. According to Leithwood & Riehl, (2003), effective leaders influence staff by "offering intellectual stimulation," "providing individualized support," and "providing an appropriate model" (P. 4). Here we review the effects of academic leaders on human resources mentioned by Leithwood & Riehl, (2003). Effective academic leaders encourage their

staff to work and make a comparison between what is being done and what should be achieved. This challenge can help staff realize the difference between the quality of their work and the value of the shared organizational objectives. This comparison serves as a motive to make staff reconsider their activities and attempt to make their performance consistent with the organization's goal. In order to better influence staff, leaders need to be caring and respectful to individuals and their concerns. Since the progress of any organization is tied to the individuals' growth and improvement, leaders ought not to neglect the support of staff. Also, academic leaders provide staff with models which are in line with the school's objectives and values. By suggesting desired organizational models, staff is more likely to show an inclination to change and elevating their capabilities.

Another significant impact of academic leadership is organizational development. Organizational development is the element through which leaders can unify staff and create a community pursuing the same targets. Some of the effects of academic leadership on organizational development stated by Leithwood & Riehl, (2003) are reviewed here. Academic leaders have the potential to firstly, establish a strong academic culture. Effective leaders tend to set common "beliefs, values, norms and attitudes" (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, P. 5) among staff which can help develop the sense of trust and camaraderie in the group. In fact, within this culture goals are defined, and work is conducted. Secondly, designing the structure of the organization is one of the biggest impacts leaders make on an organization. Organizational structure is the core element of a system. Through the designed structure, leaders screen the way tasks are assigned and performed, how effective the performance is, what supplies and resources should be allocated, and how effective the operating system is. Current organizational structure is constantly monitored by leaders and in case of any need for change in the system, the structure is modified, and positive changes are introduced to the system. Finally, leaders attempt to manage the academic environment by collaborating with staff and engaging them in decision-making procedures.

Job satisfaction of staff is the other area where leadership has a profound influence on. There is an abundance of definitions regarding job satisfaction in

different literature. For instance, Shields (2007) and Shraibman (2008) stated that job satisfaction is tied to the overall view of an employee to different aspects of a job and the fact that whether he or she approves of the job. Wray, Luft & Highland's (1996) definition of job satisfaction is consistent with Shields (2007) and Shraibman (2008). They believed that job satisfaction means a feeling of happiness an employee receives when working. There is still this argument that feeling of happiness and satisfaction is abstract and hard to measure. Besides, the feeling of happiness and satisfaction varies from person to person.

With all being mentioned, the relationship between leadership and job satisfaction has always been popular with scholars and researchers (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). However, job satisfaction is bound up with a variety of factors; some scholars are of the conviction that there is a strong relationship between effective leadership and high job satisfaction. According to different studies conducted by various researchers, job satisfaction correlates positively with effective leadership behavior while there is a negative correlation between job satisfaction and destructive leadership behavior (Einarsen, Aasland & Skogstad, 2007; Kellerman, 2004; Schyns & Hansbrough, 2010; Schyns & Schillng, 2013). Constructive leadership behavior such as supporting staff, valuing them, and engaging them in organizational decision-making procedures can contribute to winning followers' trust. This way, since staff willingly and enthusiastically follow the leader, they feel happier compared to being bound to do a task (Bass, 2000; Bolden, Hawkins, Gosling, & Taylor, (2011); Yukl, 2010). The other positive result of high job satisfaction is higher employee retention (Froeschle & Sinkford, 2009). Wong & Heng (2009) believed that 5% increase of employee retention results in the reduction of cost for 10% and the same amount of increase in employee retention contributes to 65% of productivity. Employee turnover is one of the consequences of job dissatisfaction. According to Finch et al. (2013), replacing a discontented employee costs an organization $57,000 in total. Job satisfaction enhances employees' commitment to an organization. As stated by Allen and Meyer (1996), Organizational

commitment embodies "a psychological link between employees and their employers that influences whether they will remain or leave the organization" (P. 305).

2.2.3   Impacts of academic leadership on sustainable world

There is no denying the fact that not only can leadership in higher education play a pivotal role in societal changes, shaping democratic societies and cultural-related issues, but it can also influence environmental and biological issues including sustainability, climate change, etc. According to Anthony D. Cortese (2003), higher education leadership can keep and restore cultural and biological diversity, which are both crucial to a sustainable future. As Dyer, G., & Dyer, M. (2017) state higher education profoundly affects the mentality of intellectuals and leaders which this, in turn, leads to the construction of a sustainable society. Leaders and elites of each society are the outcomes of higher education and play a central part in the vision and direction setting of their society. Higher education leaders have such strong potential that they can create an atmosphere at university in order to promote and facilitate research and the development of sustainability in academia.

With regard to leadership influences on social and environmental development, a commitment called ACUPCC is made among American universities and colleges to support environmental solutions. ACUPCC (American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment) is an agreement among American university presidents to support research works and community activities with respect to sustainability and climate (Dyer, G., & Dyer, M., 2017). The primary objective of this agreement is to associate research and education with the global climate and suitability issues. Dyer, G., & Dyer, M. (2017) are of the conviction that by encouraging academic communities to pursue environmentally friendly activities on campus and supporting research on issues such as sustainability, leaders will be able to educate students and generate knowledge for the improvement of society and environment. One of the challenges of leadership is how to

enable a society to survive within its environmental limitations and guarantee the following generations a safe and promising future (Bowers, 1995; Maynard & Mehrtens, 1993; Sagan, 1994).

2.3   Challenges in the selection of academic leaders

Academic leadership is an issue which can affect different aspects of society and the world. Academic leadership can have both direct and indirect impact on students' growth, therefore, the selection of leaders in higher education is one of the most important concerns in academia.

2.3.1   Lack of competency and training

Like any other professional posts, leaders and managers are expected to possess managerial expertise and experience. When it comes to the academic world, there is often this concern if leaders leading different parts of university possess managerial related education and experience. Competency, as a critical factor in the field of management and leadership, gains massive importance in literature. According to Brits (2012), competency is defined as "behaviors that consist of the knowledge, skills, and attributes required for successful performance" (p.17). In order for an educational institution to develop, it is crucial to pay enough attention to the selection of leaders in different sections. Competency profile should be well-designed so that people who plan to get the position of leadership meet the requirements. One of the biggest challenges of leadership in higher education is inadequate research on the training of university leaders (Gmelch, 2000). As Gmelch (2000) states academics are trained in order to be specialists in a focused and deep knowledge and often specialized in a specific field of study. When it comes to leadership, there is no wonder that requiring some specialists to make into generalists without proper training will contribute to

plenty of problems. "Since many academic leaders first receive their training in their academic careers in research and teaching, they scarcely anticipate their current leadership positions and thus have had minimal management training" (Gmelch, 2002, P.3).

Academic leaders, as those setting directions for academia and influencing staff, need to possess a set of qualities and skills. Most academic leaders are university staff who make progress and take leadership positions. Since academic leaders plan for internal and external organizational goals, they need to be able to broadly observe the progress of their educational institution. Gmelch believes that "academic leaders must be generalist" (2002, P. 4). Leaders must be dominant over their organization and broaden their vision to be able to deal with diverse issues and problems. Gardner's notion is consistent with Gmelch (2002), "tomorrow's leaders will very likely have begun life as trained specialists, but to mature as leaders they must sooner or later climb out of the trenches of specialization and rise above the boundaries that separate the various segments of society" (1987, P. 7). To transform academic specialist into effective generalist leaders, it is crucial to pay serious attention to leadership training and practices among university staff.

2.3.2   Time constraint

Besides the leadership training and experience, which is considered a challenge, time allocation to administrative duties and academic advancement in academia is another big challenge. The leaders of university including heads of departments, who are performing administrative activities and also involved in teaching and working as a lecturer, constantly face time restriction in their jobs. Academic leaders are always complaining about keeping a balance between their private and professional life. In a research carried out by Dimici, Seggie, Hacifazlioğlu & Caner, (2016), they confirm that "the department heads continue to pursue a balance in private and professional life, and research, teaching, and leadership" (P.141).

One big difference between academic staff and employees in other organizations is the autonomy they experience in their workplace. Faculty staff usually enjoy more autonomy as compared to employees in other organization (Rowley & Sherman, 2003). Gmelch (2002) believes that one important reason why academic staff chooses to work at university is the autonomy and independence they experience. This fact does not hold true for academic leaders. Gmelch (2002) also adds "even at home; academics find that leadership is not a "family friendly" profession" (P. 4). Hence, most academic staff finds it hard to sacrifice their profession and family life for leadership.

2.3.3   lack of incentive

These days, selecting academic leaders in different sections of university is one of the challenges educational institutions tackle. Since most people who work at university are mainly teachers and researchers, in most cases, academic leaders are selected among them. These teachers and researchers choose to work at university to pursue their own targets and dreams, which are research and academic improvements. Owing to this fact, they believe engaging in leadership positions at university can deviate them from their main targets. (Gmelch, 2000) states that "Academic leaders try to retain their identity as scholars while serving in administration"; and "most academic leaders feel most comfortable and competent in their scholar role" (P.P 70-71). The findings of the research conducted by Dimici, Seggie, Hacifazlioğlu & Caner, (2016) suggested that "the position of department headship was not regarded as a profession by most participants because their academic identity outweighs the departmental head identity" (P. 141).

Similarly, Gmelch & Miskin (1993) asserted that since 65 percent of department heads turn back to faculty positions once they are done with their administrative job, they tend to maintain their research interests and pursue them. According to Gmelch & Burns (1994) spending inadequate time on pursuing re-

search and scholarly interests is considered the most significant stress experienced by department heads and the third biggest for deans. To solve such problems, it is believed that the issue of balance in academic leadership should be seriously studied.

The other reason why faculty members show little interest in accepting headship is lack of authority. Dimici, Seggie, Hacifazlioğlu & Caner, (2016) mention that faculty members are reluctant to take the position of department headship because of huge workload, lack of motivation, and lack of authority for the given responsibilities. In fact, before being recognized as a head, department chairs are regarded as a peer and a colleague. Rowley & Sherman, (2003) believe that faculty members probably show resistance at times to following a head's requests and orders, who used to be their former colleagues. Regarding this issue, Rowley & Sherman, (2003) rightly point to two old proverbs which suit this challenge: "it is also true that prophets are generally not recognized by their own people"; and "familiarity brings contempt" (P. 1061). Department heads, on the other hand, do not feel comfortable to perform their leadership responsibilities and exercise their authority. One reason for such behavior can be the fact that department heads consider this position as temporary and they believe, sooner or later, they have to hand it over to another colleague. Such a mentality can cause department chairs to avoid making critical decisions and take sides in the face of pressing issues because they fear from being negatively viewed by faculty staff (Rowley & Sherman, 2003). As it can be seen from the challenges, not every faculty member is capable of taking the role of leadership in a department and here is where the importance of well-trained leaders is more highlighted.

2.4   Importance of training department heads

With all being said on the importance of academic leadership and the challenges related to it, the significance of leadership training and education can be better understood. As mentioned earlier, it is a common trend in academic world that

university leadership positions are comprised of university staff; and university staff are mostly specialized in specific disciplines and have no or minimal leadership background (Gmelch, 2002). Similarly, Stanley and Algert (2007) asserted that department heads, in general, take no professional leadership training. Therefore, to lead academia towards its ultimate targets and objectives, academic leaders most probably would benefit from leadership training for responsibilities they are unfamiliar with. Department heads, as stated by Nguyen, are in charge of some specific duties and responsibilities including "department governance, program management, human resource management, budget and resources, external communication and office management" (2013, P. 2). As it can be seen from the wide range of duties a department head undertakes, one can claim that not every faculty member has the proper qualities and expertise to take this position. Thus, investment in leadership development seems wise. Fulmer (1997) believes the more investment in developing leaders for the future, the better prepared an organization can be in the face of coming challenges.

Becoming an expert takes time (Gmelch, 2000). Gmelch (2000) interestingly points out that it takes seven years for a faculty member to be an associate professor and called an expert in the American university, and seven other years for gaining the full professor status. He also argues that when seven to fourteen years is required to gain specialty in an academic setting, how do we expect to make a leader out of a weekend seminar? Similarly, Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Romer, (1993) claim that for an employee to transform into an expert in the corporate world, ten years of preparation and training is required. Although an abundance of discussion on the importance and effects of leadership is available in literature, little attention has been given to leadership development and training. According to Conger & Benjamin, 1999; Gmelch, 2000a, 2000b insufficiency of research in relation to leader development and training is the most noticeable defect in leadership studies.

Department heads comprise a big part of a faculty. Gmelch & Miskin (1993) point out around 80,000 scholars in America work in the position of department

heads and about one-fourth of them will change every year. Department head-ship has become a focal position in academia; it has been such an influential po-sition that Gmelch, Wolverton, & Sarros, (1999a) claim that about 80 percent of administrative decisions are made by heads of departments. Department head-ship is believed to be a professional position these days; Department heads, now-adays, are expected to enhance their potential and abilities to undertake critical managerial tasks including goal and mission setting, financial management, hu-man resource management, etc. (Meek, Goedegebuure, Santiago, & Carvalho, 2010). According to Gmelch (2000), a national survey on novice academic leaders discovered that faculty members experience metamorphic changes to transform into administrators. This is a transformation from "Solitary to Social", "Focused to Fragmented", "Autonomy to Accountability", Manuscripts to Memoranda", "Private to public", "professing to Persuading", "Stability to Mobility", "Client to Custodian", and "Austerity to Prosperity" (P. 70). Academic leaders should figure out that they are no longer a faculty member pursuing their own goals and objectives; instead, they must be capable of socializing with people and coming out of their solitary box. They should be aware of the fact that they are not a teacher anymore and staff is not their students. They should learn how to com-municate their ideas with staff and convince them. While faculty enjoy their au-tonomy and act as customers asking for support and resources, leaders are ex-pected to be accountable and provide resources. Leadership is tightly linked to change; and change, in its essence, is associated with movement and mobility. Contrary to faculty who look for stability in their career, leaders seek for change and encourage people to move. The recognition of these metamorphic shifts are essential for selecting academic leaders.

When it comes to leadership training, not enough strategies and practices have been introduced in the literature. Although some concur with the idea that great leaders are born leaders and consider leadership an innate ability, many believe that like any profession which requires teaching and training, leadership, too, is in need of preparation and education. Bolman & Gallos, (2010) introduce

two kinds of preparation for academic leaders, "intellectual and personal & behavioral" (P.9). They believe intellectual preparation refers to acquiring knowledge in order to set a roadmap through which academic leaders can vividly observe situations they are encountering and find ways to deal with them. They consider knowledge as power and believe leaders who are equipped with this power will recognize when, where and how to deal with different situations. According to Bennis (2003), you will get to know what you should do when you thoroughly understand it. The second mode of preparation which is personal and behavioral emphasizes on individual characteristics; features like bravery, motivation, self-assurance, adaptability, innovation, strength, etc. Training programs helping leaders strengthen these personal and behavioral qualities can equip them with a vision by which they will be able to identify their strengths and weaknesses, how to face challenges and involve their followers in resolving them, and what strategies to practice.

Gmelch (2002) concentrates on three areas of influence required to develop academic leadership in training programs. 1) "Conceptual understanding of the unique roles and responsibilities encompassed in academic leadership; 2) the skills necessary to achieve the results through working with faculty, staff, students and other administrators; and 3) the practice of reflection to learn from past experiences and perfect the art of leadership" (PP. 4,5). In order for better understanding the diverse leadership dimensions, leaders need to obtain cognitive and conceptual knowledge regarding leadership models, theories, and frameworks (Conger & Benjamin, 1999). It is of high importance for department heads to understand their roles and responsibilities and know what outcomes these responsibilities bring about. Knowledge and skills are always complementary. Knowledge per se without proper skills will lead us nowhere. As said by Gautama Buddha: "To know and not to use is not yet to know". In order to turn their knowledge into practice, academic leaders need to acquire proper skills and improve them. For developing leadership skills, Gmelch (2002) suggests that academic leaders can attend workshops, seminars, and lectures and practice the obtained skills through simulations and role-playing. He also adds that through

these types of training, attendants can transform their knowledge into personal qualities and consequently apply them in their practices. 'Reflective practice' as the third area of influence refers to raising personal awareness and self-knowledge. By creating a condition for leaders to reflect on their actions and receive feedbacks from their trustworthy peers and colleagues, they can develop their leadership skills and insights

3 RESEARCH PROBLEMS / RESEARCH TASK

As mentioned earlier, the author began this research with this primary hunch that there might be some challenges with academic leadership at Finnish universities. Lack of training and management background may be stated as an important challenge in Finnish higher educational leadership. In this research, the researcher discovered problems with the ways academic leaders, especially heads of departments end up there and how this can affect the quality of education in the short and long term. The research questions will be '**to what extent academic leaders in departmental level are specialized in the field of leadership in higher education in Finland?'** and **'How department heads are selected in Finnish Higher education?'**

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

This section illustrates the reasons behind this research encompassing the initial incentives to conduct the study, as well as the introduction of the context, participants, research process and method, data analysis, together with related issues such as reliability and ethical solutions.

3.1 The Research Topic

This research focuses on the issue of professionalism in Finnish higher education leadership. This topic was chosen owing to both being of the researcher's interest and the primary assumption that there might be shortcomings in Finnish higher education leadership. The basic notion of conducting this research topic came from the observation of leadership in school setting and leadership in higher education in Finland. Finland is known to be among countries enjoying high status in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) administered by

the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). As mentioned by Hargreaves, Halász & Pont, (2007) Finland is "an example of a systemic approach to school leadership, because of its particular approach to distributing leadership systematically (P. 5)." Comparing leaders' proficiency and leadership importance attached to Finnish school system with the one in Finnish higher education was the stepping stone for the author to probe into the existing academic leadership in Finland. The author assumed that one reason that the Finnish higher education system is not as well-known as its elementary and secondary counterparts could lie in leadership matters. Because when it comes to school leadership in Finland, there are quite clear criteria for selecting a school leader. As Taipale (2012) states, school leaders are obliged to possess teaching qualifications along with either a university program in the field of educational leadership or a Certificate of Educational Administration. He also explains that this university program in educational leadership includes 25 credits which consists of the following subjects:

"1. Basics of public law

2. General and municipal administration

3. Educational administration

4. Human resource administration

5. Financial administration" (Taipale, 2012, p. 28)

However, the selection of academic leaders in Finland seems not to be as regulated as the one in school level.

Attending the LEAD workshop regarding academic leadership at the University of Tampere, the author came across some challenges including professionalism, internationalism, and funding that Finnish higher education leadership is confronting. It was a great opportunity for the author to attend this workshop in the very beginning of this research because he had this chance to meet some department heads of Tapmere University and teachers teaching management and leadership courses. During the talks with department heads and in the discussions in the workshop, lack of professionalism in academic leadership came up several times. Therefore, this research began with plenty of hunches,

expectations, and predictions which some came true, some were proved wrong, and some findings caught us by surprise.

This study seeks to illustrate the importance and attention given to academic leadership in Finnish universities. The study focuses on department heads as mid-level leaders at two universities in Finland, Jyväskylä University and Tampere University. Since Jyväskylä University and Tampere University are two big universities in Finland and they were easier for the researcher to reach, the researcher decided to conduct the research on these two universities. The author also decided to concentrate on department heads because he intended to begin with the smaller-size administration of university and go further in future research. To carry out the research, four department heads in each university were selected to conduct semi-formal interviews with them. The selection of departments was based on Becher's typology of disciplines. Becher (1994) states that "it is possible to discern with Biglan (1973) and Kolb (1981), four main intellectual clusters, which Biglan labels hard pure, soft pure, hard applied and soft applied, and Kolb describes as abstract reflective, concrete reflective, abstract active and concrete active. In each case these divisions are identified respectively with the natural sciences, the humanities and social sciences, the science-based professions and the social professions" (P. 152).

3.2   The Research Process and the Participants

The research was conducted among department heads as mid-level university leaders. As mentioned earlier, grounded on Becher's typology, four departments from Jyväskylä University and four faculties from Tampere University were selected. It is worthwhile to mention here that according to The Constitution of Finland, the Universities Act, Chapter 1., Section 3, regarding autonomy, universities are given the right to "have autonomy, through which they safeguard scientific, artistic and higher education freedom. The autonomy entails the right of universities to make their own decisions in matters related to their internal administration" (P.2). To the researcher's surprise, there are no longer departments

at the University of Tampere; in fact, faculties are known as the major sections of the University. Therefore, the administrative structure of Tampere University varies from its counterpart at the University of Jyväskylä. More information on this issue will be presented in the Result section.

It was the researcher's primary assumption that the departments are managed by only one head; however, in the process of selecting department heads for interviews, it turned out two department heads, one in charge of student affairs and the other one taking the responsibility of administration, manage each department. Therefore, since administrative heads' responsibilities are closely tied to managerial tasks, law, and legislation, the author decided to interview heads of administration in each department and faculty. To do so, contact information of the heads was collected, emails were sent to them for setting the appointments, and information about the researcher and the reasons for the interview was included in the emails.

Qualitative interviews were selected for data collection due to the fact that interviews help researchers dig into the experiences, thoughts, and emotions of interviewees (Hirsjärvi and Hurme, 2001). As the purpose of this study is to explore the participants' experience, background, and challenges in terms of academic leadership, interviews can pretty well meet the objectives of this study. Interviews pave the way for researchers to be more flexible in the process of data collection, seek more elaborations, and even ask unplanned follow-up questions. As Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S., (2011) claim "the core of responsive interviewing involves formulating and asking three kinds of questions: main questions, probes, and follow-up questions. Main questions address the overall research problem and structure the interview; probes help manage the conversation and elicit details; and follow-up questions explore and test ideas that emerge during the interviews" (P. xv, xvi).

Thirty-minute semi-structured interviews were planned. Semi-structure interviews give researchers the freedom to sometimes get off the path and then

return back again to the central theme. This way, researchers gain a more comprehensive and holistic picture of the subject. The interview questions were planned based on the research theme; with the progress of the data collection, some questions were added, modified and elaborated according to the first few interviews. Interview questions revolved around the participants' background, their stories about how they ended up taking this position, challenges they had faced as heads, their specialization and whether they had been taking any formal leadership training before being assigned as heads or during their tenure. All interviews were recorded on two devices, a Samsung Galaxy S4 smartphone and an MP4 player, to protect the data in case of any probable devices' malfunction. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. There were 4 hours of recorded data in total. Interviews were conducted in English and both the interviewer and the participants are non-native English speakers with proven language skills at academic level. Due to this fact, there have been some minor grammatical mistakes which have been smoothed away for ease of reading. To carry out the interviews, meetings were arranged in each participant's office.

The participant of this study were all heads of departments at the University of Jyväskylä and heads of faculties at the University of Tampere. As said earlier, due to the difference in the structure of administration at these two universities, the position of headship is addressed differently; however, the range of responsibilities and tasks are, to a greater or lesser degree, similar. In the Result section for the ease of quotation, participants are labeled P.1, P.2, P.3, etc.

3.3   Research Methods

The present study employs a **qualitative content analysis** approach to examine the issue of leadership professionalism in Finnish academic sphere in departmental level. A qualitative method serves this study very well because it is an "approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2014, P.4). In line with Cre-

swell's notion, Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, (2015) assert that "qualitative researcher is concerned with the meaning people attach to things in their lives" (P. 7). Qualitative research is mostly used for research areas where researchers acquire little information from the literature (Creswell, 2013) and attempt to explore some real phenomena in the outside world.

In particular, this study investigates the roles and expertise of heads of departments, together with their working conditions and challenges they confront in this position. It also attempts to illuminate the extent to which leadership training and expertise might influence the efficiency of department heads. This focus can enable this case study to not only rely upon the theories existing in the literature, but also explore novel findings regarding academic leadership in the context of Finland. With the help of data collected through interviews, which exhibit a sample of realistic conditions, experiences, and challenges of department heads in Finnish universities, some dark sides of academic leadership at the universities of Finland will be clear and shown to readers.

3.4   Data Analysis

Content analysis is utilized to draw "replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of its use" (Krippendorff, 2004, P. 18). Qualitative content analysis is one of the most popular research methods with researchers to analyze text data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). To code data, there are two approaches, *emergent and a prior* coding (Stemler, 2001). "With *emergent* coding, categories are established following some preliminary examination of the data"; however, "with *a priori* coding, the categories are established prior to the analysis based upon some theory" (Stemler, 2001, P. 3-4). According to these types of coding, the author decided to adopt the emergent coding; with the adoption of this coding approach, researchers can probe into their data and present their findings without prejudgment and too much reliance on the previous theories and literature. Emergent coding is consistent with inductive reasoning. "Inductive reasoning is the process

of developing conclusions from collected data by weaving together new information into theories. The author analyzes the text with an open mind in order to identify meaningful subjects answering the research question" (Bengtsson, 2016, P.9-10). In the process of data analysis, the author preferred "manifest analysis" to "latent analysis"; in the manifest analysis, the focus is on "what has been said?" while latent analysis concentrates on "what intended to been said?" (Bengtsson, 2016, P.9). In other words, instead of interpreting the participants' points of view, within which the researcher's judgment and presuppositions can be involved, the author attempted to utilize participants' words and stay closer to the explicit meanings and understandings emanating from the interviews.

The process of data analysis was conducted as Bengtsson (2016) divides it into four stages of "the decontextualization, the recontextualization, the categorization, and the compilation" (P. 11). In the process of decontextualization the researcher attempts to get familiar with the data, read through the text data in order to grasp the whole concept; then the transcribed text is split into smaller "meaning units," and each meaning unit is tagged a code. Recontextualization regards the rechecking of the meaning units and the data text to ensure all aspects of the data have been covered. The next step is the categorization; after condensing the expanded meaning units, categories and themes along with sub-categories are defined. In the last step, which is the compilation, the process of analysis and writing commences (Bengtsson, 2016).

3.5   Ethical Solutions

Before conducting interviews, participants were contacted through email. A brief introduction of the author, the author's supervisor and the topic of the thesis were included in the emails. The participants were informed that their anonymity would be assured and the collected data would be only used in this particular study. Within this study, participant's anonymity is maintained by "actively obscuring any features which may identify them" (Curtis et al., 2014, p.186). Regarding the privacy issues, in order to protect the participant's privacy, we forbear to

mention the selected departments; otherwise it would be easy to identify the participants with further information. It is worthwhile to mention that participants were selected among the department heads at the Universities of Jyväskylä and Tampere. As said before, departments were chosen based on Becher's typology, meaning that the participants come from hard pure, soft pure, hard applied and soft applied departments. Participation in the study was voluntary, and the possibility was provided for the participants to withdraw from the research. Audio recordings of the interviews were made with the permission of participants. Regarding the researcher's stance in the study, the author has strived to be committed to the nature of research and remain neutral to the findings of the study without any biases.

4   RESULTS

This chapter aims to present the findings obtained from the conducted interviews in two Finnish universities, Jyväskylä University and Tampere University. Before commencing with the results and findings, it is worth noting that there was no intention of comparing these two universities and the aim was to observe the above-mentioned universities as two universities in Finland. As mentioned earlier in the previous chapter, during this scientific journey some early presumptions, hunches, expectations, and predictions were made and then came true by the obtained findings; however, the author faced an abundance of surprising facts regarding higher education leadership in Finland, which made him reconsider the primary hunches and expectations. Structure-wise, universities of Finland have the complete autonomy to decide on their administrative structural designs (The Constitution of Finland, the Universities Act, Chapter 1, Section 3). Therefore, contrary to the assumption that universities in Finland might follow the same national administrative structures was proven wrong and during the process of interviews, the divergence between these two universities became clearer. More detailed explanations will be given later.

4.1   Academic leadership

In this section, the prime focus is on the participants' leadership background, the significance of leadership specialization for department heads, and characteristics defined for academic leaders. It also includes differentiating between the aspects of academic leadership to those aspects in other business enterprises.

4.1.1   Participant's background

One of the main objectives of this study is to display the importance of meritocracy and attention given to leadership specialization in Finnish academic sphere.

Therefore, the first question was devised to discover the current conditions regarding academic leadership specialization at these two cases of Finnish universities. The findings suggest that approximately among all the participants, few of them have academic leadership background and expertise. Here the focus is on the participants' academic degree; the information on whether or not the participants have ever taken any leadership courses or programs will be presented in the section concerning training programs.

"I have a master degree from Education. I graduated from the University of Jyvaskyla long time ago. My major was Education at that time." (P.1)

"I have a quite long and diverse academic history. I started studying with some of particle nuclear physics and then moved to applied material physics." (P.2)

"I did my Master's and PhD studies in political science, and after that, I worked as a researcher." (P.3)

"My major was public law which I found it is quite good for my position as a head of administration." (P.5)

"I studied political science and then I have done studies in public law" (P.6)

It is worthwhile to notice here that mentioning participants' academic background does not violate their privacy because, for instance, if a participant's degree is in Education, it does not necessarily mean that he or she runs the department of education. It is an exciting part of the findings to know that people with diverse academic background run departments which are utterly irrelevant to their academic degree.

4.1.2   Definition and characteristics of academic leaders

In the process of the interviews, participants addressed the issue of academic leadership and the features one must possess in order to make a successful leader. Different aspects of leadership were considered, and various definitions of leadership were presented. For instance, **direction setting and defining**

shared goals were regarded as the main responsibilities of academic leaders by P.1, P.5 and, P.6.

> "I think leadership is really highly important in our organization and sometimes I think that we lack leadership. And by leadership I mean that we have objectives and goals and vision that we share, it is really important that we have the same vision and we work towards the goals." (P.1)

> "I see leadership as a way to define goals, vision, mission and then trying to make indicators and try to look the process if we are going to the right way or wrong way? So we are not lost we know where we are going." (P.1)

> "Somehow I think it is looking to the future and making things for the future and maybe to lead people to look the same way." (P.5)

> "I think it is just more like guiding the way forward; it's not like being the one and only to decide what is right, but it is more like gathering the information from everybody else and then drawing the conclusion of what would be the right way to proceed in any given matter." (P.6)

P.2 is of the opinion that academic leaders' main responsibility is to facilitate the development of a faculty by preparing the grounds for faculty members to enjoy the provided facilities and chances of advancement.

> "The basic most important thing for the head of a department is to guarantee a piece of work and facilities and possibilities to do their work for people in this department." (P.2)

Regarding leaders' personal qualities, features including being a good listener, decisiveness, support, and open-mindedness were the most mentioned qualities.

4.1.3 Academic leadership vs. leadership in business

Interesting discussions were made by some of the participants in terms of the distinctions between leadership in academia and leadership in business enterprises. P.1 believed that the autonomy existing in academia makes universities

unique from other business enterprises and it makes exercising leadership more difficult and controversial at times.

> "There is a lot of freedom, really a lot of freedom (in academia) and when you start making some kind of rule or common processes people are very critical and very aware of the rights." (P.1)

P.2 and P.3 mentioned that as opposed to business and industrial enterprises, the administrative structures of universities, considered as expert organizations, are not as hierarchical and top-down management is not very popular with academics.

> "In a company, the head of a company probably can be involved in details, but not in here (university); because it is clear that those persons who really do the actual work, they know that work much better than I can ever know. They are the experts; they are the people who really make the outcomes of the department." (P.2)

> "When we speak about university, we speak about expert organization; perhaps there is a difference between expert organizations and some other kind of organizations in which staff is not at the same levels when it comes to knowledge or resources or something like that. Here everybody is on the same level, I don't have better knowledge than people here; a rector doesn't have any other kind of policy abilities than all the members of this organization; all the professors are as qualified as the rector, but I think that the same applies to all expert organizations." (P.3)

4.2   Challenges of department heads as academic mid-level leaders

One of the best features of interviews is that one can have the luxury of listening to people's life story, experiences, thoughts and emotions, and practical challenges and obstacles they strive to overcome in their lives. This section deals with the findings which suggest the challenges and difficulties department heads at these two universities encounter. The interesting part the findings is that these challenges are, to a greater or lesser degree, commonplace among almost all the department heads. Among all the challenges, which will be presented as follows,

lack of leadership training and briefing, together with human resource management are of the most mentioned ones by the department heads.

4.2.1   Insufficient leadership training

According to the findings in the interviews, not only have most of the participants not majored in the fields of study associated with management and leadership, but also very few of them have received formal on-the job training or even briefing before taking the position.

> "I think about myself when I came here; I had the feeling that or I was expecting that I would get some kind of formal training. I didn't know that we didn't get any formal training; we just have to come here and start the work. I was expecting that I have some kinds of formal training, but it didn't exist. It was funny because I didn't think about it; I thought, of course, there will be some kind of training" (P.1, 6).

> "At first, I wasn't aware of the procedures, for instance, in the recruitment process which is really time-consuming and difficult and complicated; they are pretty formal compared to, for instance, like business companies" (P.3, 23).

> "There might have been some (training programs) earlier, but not at that moment when I got the position" (P.4, 29).

Regarding insufficient briefing before his leadership tenure, P.3 also shares some other challenges he had to deal with.

> "The other challenge was all these computer programs, I don't know what they are called [thinking], in ministration they are called 'systems'. We have at least different systems that I somehow have to deal with it; I have to know how to work with it" (P.3, 23).

"I didn't know exactly what my work would be, and there was actually nobody who could give me any advice, so it was like learning by doing (P.6, 43).

"We didn't have processes; that was a big difficulty because I didn't have anybody to ask and we didn't have, you know, these processes, how can I put it in English, we didn't have descriptions about this (job tasks and its procedures), and it was the main difficulty I think. I didn't know my colleagues; we didn't have any structures, we didn't have meetings; I was just on my own with the dean" (P.7, 51).

She also adds:

"I think the first thing was that I had to study the organization of the University and get to know how it works; we have boards and other things, but I have to get to know how they work and how can I get my own things to go ahead in this organization" (P.7, 51).

4.2.2 Human resource management

The subject of human resource management has always been mingled with the issue of leadership. It is commonly believed that the success of leadership lies in the success of human resource management. As it was repeatedly stated earlier in the section of the literature review by different scholars, the main responsibility of leaders is to set shared objectives and directions for their followers and create incentives in order to mobilize them toward the same goal. Human beings are such complicated resources with complex mental, emotional, logical, and physical aspects that leading and managing them require extensive and multidimensional skills and expertise.

There is no wonder to discover this fact that one of the biggest challenges academia encounters is human resource management. In fact, human resource is the biggest asset of universities, and the effective management of human resource can contribute to academic and social prosperity. The question that arises here is **to reach this end, are we preparing qualified and efficient academic leaders to**

make the best of human resources and transform the potential challenges and threats into opportunities? In order to get a better understanding of human resource management in academia and its challenges, some of the participants' experiences and viewpoints are mentioned here.

"I think the most difficult things (in leadership) are always related to people and there are some kind of old wounds that are not healed. But you can feel it that there is something under the surface, and it is very tricky to find out what is happening and what is wrong and usually they are related to people; certain people and their feelings and their disappointment and their behaviour and how they affect their colleagues and the whole team. Those are the most difficult things I have faced." (P.1, 4).

"At first, I thought that I wasn't able to dedicate (so much time), so I tried to do everything myself. I didn't realize that I should perhaps discuss things with other people (P.3, 23-24).

"(I thought) I am responsible for them (tasks) and I have to decide on them by myself not discuss with anybody else; at first, I wasn't a very democratic leader at all because I thought that I had to do it, I could not be democratic, but after that I realized that, of course, I can be democratic and nowadays I'm much more democratic; (now) we discuss openly about everything. Because I didn't have any guidelines; what should I do, how to behave otherwise than smiling and being nice to everybody and so on (P.3, 24).

"Because we organize the task of administrations quiet differently earlier and ,of course, it is always a bit hard for people that someone new comes to the position and changes things and people don't always like it" (P.5,33).

"It's also a position (department headship) where you can get all the rubbish to your neck, I mean that people don't dare to behave like that to the dean; it's easier to come to someone in administration and maybe not always behaving so nicely; that's not very nice part of my job, but anyway I can handle it" (P.5, 35).

"we are dealing with human beings here we have like 400 people in this faculty and full of, you know, researchers and teachers and they are all individuals; well it's also the fun in this job, you know, you're working with people but it can also be challenging" (P.6, 40-41).

Another interesting point mentioned by the P.1 in terms of human resource is the type of relationship with colleagues when one is selected as a leader or a manager among faculty members. S/he scrupulously points out how the relationship between faculty members alters after the selection of the department or faculty leader and the consequences that follow.

"Before that, you were colleagues with your team members, suddenly you are the leader. And it means that you are quite alone, you can't have the discussion with your colleague that you had earlier, and you can't have them anymore; so you are quite alone. That is a thing that when you are alone, and there is a lot of new things, you have to have some kind of support network and that is something that I think we should focus more and give them (leaders) this kind of support" (P.1,9)

One other noticeable finding in this regard is the lack of consistent and comprehensive long-term strategic perspectives in academic leadership. P.6 believes that changing deans in faculty means changes in administrative procedures and even targets.

"I think the challenges might be that the head of the faculty is the dean and he or she does not have a permanent position; it's usually somebody from the academia, and it changes regularly; so it's always to start with the new dean, and they have a different kind of ways to lead the faculty and also it's not like we have some freedom in this work" (P.6, 40)

4.2.3 Workload of department heads

In this part of the interviews, some of the participants declared their complaints against some irrelevant and irrational amount of work they are obliged to undertake. They claimed that the position of department headship is not considered a professional position which grants them the freedom to concentrate on academic leadership agenda and, in a real sense, allows them to lead the department. They

also believed that they are tied to some irrelevant bureaucratic affairs preventing them from doing their main tasks. In the participants' points of view, what makes the situation worse, in this case, is the fact that they have not been trained for these tasks, and it causes them extra hassle.

"I have been put in a place of a secretary from the point of view of people (faculty members) here. If they have something to ask about practical matters (bureaucratic affairs), they come from that door and ask me instead of a secretary who was sitting there before and knew all these things much better than I can ever know. And there's no one to take care of these matters in the department at the moment; and that is the big cause of a lot of practical problems" (P.2, 17).

In the other part of the interview, he also adds some points in this regard;

"The first thing is that we should be allowed to really practice leadership and not this practical matters (irrelevant bureaucratic affairs). Leadership is somehow a side stream in this entire spectrum of your job. I think we should lead, in a sense; we should tackle with things related to leadership, strategy and these kinds of things, but that is not the case; that is not what we are doing (P.2, 18).

"It (department headship) is usually a four-year period and a lot of administration, but it is not a full-time job. So I have to do my professorial duties besides being a head of the department; a lot of work, I can't do my own work like being a professor. I might have some time to do my research, but I don't have energy; that's a kind of problem. I have to do teaching as well. That's the difference between a dean and the head of a department because a dean obviously doesn't have any other duties than being a dean" (P.3, 21).

4.3   Lack of incentive

Lack of incentive could be categorized under the challenges of academic leadership, but the author, due to the importance of incentive and the wide range of content, decided to deal with it in a separate section. However, it is customary to

hear that in every organizations people strive to get promotions and achieve management and leadership positions, this is not a typical case in the academic sphere. In the academic world, not only, in some cases, is there not any competition for taking management positions, but also people often attempt to evade from taking these kinds of positions and accepting responsibilities. However, it should be mentioned that this is not the case for all types of units.

Incentive is regarded as the cornerstone of any job's success. Once motivation is in place, efforts will be made for innovation, development, and change. In reply to questions regarding motivation, interesting findings were discovered. To the author's surprise, some of the department heads were thoroughly frustrated with their position and immensely reluctant to continue it. Some of the reasons are categorized as follows.

4.3.1   Incompatibility of department headship with the participant's interest and expertise

Some of the participants in this study stated that they were not inclined to take the position of headship at the very beginning and it is not an interesting job for them.

> "The problem in the university is that our deans or head of faculties, they have not come here to be a leader, they have come here to be researchers and to teach" (P.1, 5).

> "It (department headship) was like a burden for you, it's not something that you are aiming. It was more like I just wish I wouldn't want to do this and then you can see what the outcomes are if you have to take it as your responsibility, but you don't have the motivation to do it" (P.1, 5-6).

> "It (department headship) is not a big merit for you, for example, especially if you are in a very active research base; especially in this kind of department, this a quite large department. So, it means it takes a lot of work and certainly affects the research. Well, I understand that especially younger professionals really try to avoid

taking this position at the active research phase; but somebody has to take this job as well. I see this (department headship) more like sort of division of sharing workload, there is something that has to be done" (P.2, 12-13).

In the other part of the interview, P.2 adds;

"It depends on a person, sometimes maybe some people may see this position (department headship) as some kind of something that is good for career or something like that; but I don't find so many such kind of people; usually it's just like another job to do" (13).

"It takes all my time. The reason why nobody's interested in this position is that, of course, we have academic backgrounds and we are researchers and teachers and we don't have any kind of education for this position of leadership or being a leader or whatsoever. Our education is, I mean, we are good at reading books, writing articles, doing research and teaching, but we are not professional leaders" (P.3, 22).

P.3 also adds:

"To some extent, I am a secretary; I mean I am kind of running everyday business here which is frustrating, filling forms and finding papers and things like" (23).

4.3.2 Discrepancies in terms of the level of motivation among participants of the two Universities

In a part of the interviews, the author asked the participants to explain how they had ended up with this position. Responses to this question can give a new insight into motivational aspects of academic administration. The following quotations belong to participants from Jyväskylä University.

"It was a very hard decision. About the head of administration, I actually had no idea how I do the work and the task" (P.1, 1).

P.1 adds:

> "it was not very easy for me to decide whether I come or not and I think the key factor was we had the deal that I would be here for one year, so I would kind of help the faculty for a year, so they can fix the position then, and there will be a permanent person. So it was never like my aim, I didn't apply for this kind of task" (P.1, 2).

> "It's sort of a tradition in this department; the head of the department position has been sort of circulating duty. So, everyone else mainly forced (me) and other professionals of the department told that is probably my duty this time to take over that (department headship). So, there was neither any sort of competition for this position nor that I would have wanted it too much, but somehow I just took that as a responsibility that I have to do" (P.2, 12).

> "It's not exactly a choice. I felt like a collective pressure, and I think I felt the pressure and I said OK I had to do this; that's why I am here" (P.3, 21).
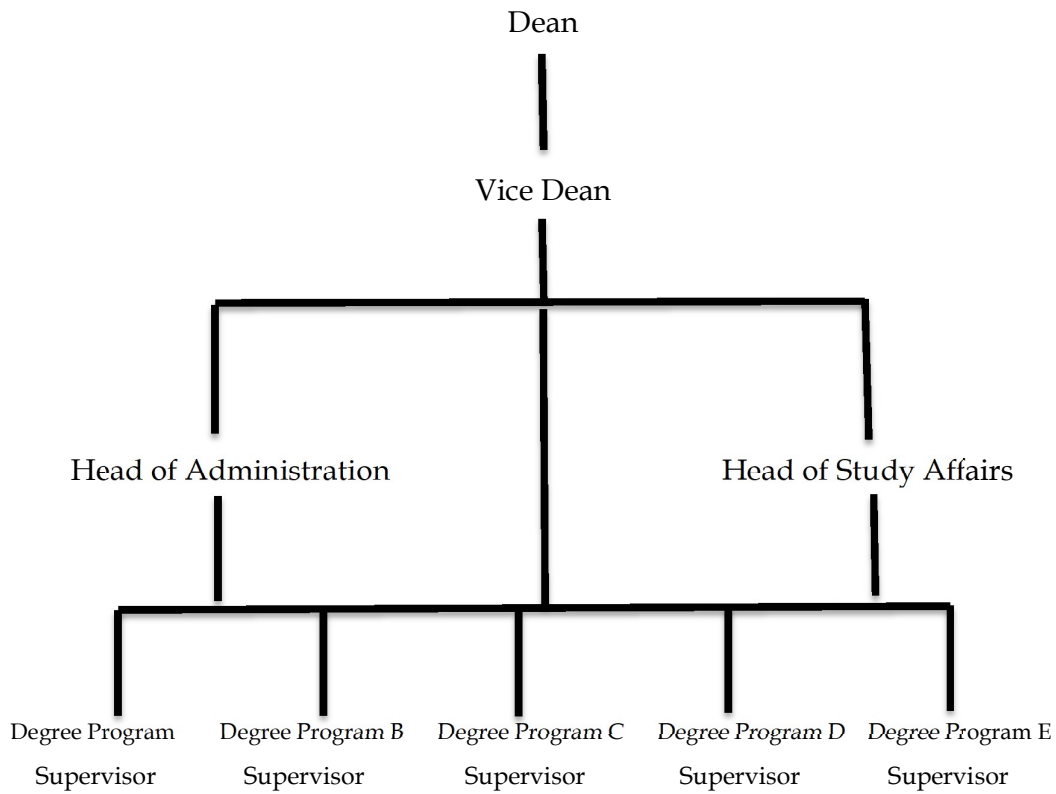
One exciting part of the findings of this study concerns the issue of motivation among the department heads. However, it was mentioned earlier that there was no intention of making a comparison between Jyväskylä University and Tampere University, the findings suggest that these two universities have adopted different leadership structures. Different strategies toward leadership structures at these two universities seem to have profound effects on the selection of department heads and their motivation toward this position.

Administrative structure in the faculties of Jyväskylä University tends to be more of a traditional and typical form meaning that the faculty is managed by a dean and a vice dean working under the dean. Faculties are divided into different departments, and each department is run by a head of administrative affairs and a

head of study affairs. However, faculties in Tampere University are split into degree programs rather than departments. At the University of Tampere, a faculty is managed by a dean who is the final decision maker and in charge of all aspects of administration and student's affairs; and there is a vice dean assisting the dean in this regard. Under the dean and the vice dean, there is Steering Committee consisting of two heads of faculties, considered as the right and left hands of the dean, and some staff who are called supervisors or coordinators. The two heads of faculties, one concentrating on administrative issues and the other one focusing on study affairs, work directly under the dean. Supervisors or coordinators control the degree programs. Degree supervisors, in fact, do not possess as much authority and power as the department heads do at the University of Jyväskylä. In other words, degree supervisors cannot be compared to heads of departments at Jyväskylä University because their responsibilities and the definition of their positions are different from the department heads. Degree supervisors are coordinators with little decision making authority in terms of budget allocations, recruitment process, study planning, etc.

Below is the diagram describing the administrative structure of faculties at Tampere University.

Figure 1. Administrative Structure of Faculties at Tampere University

Dean

Vice Dean

Head of Administration

Head of Study Affairs

Degree Program
Supervisor

Degree Program B
Supervisor

Degree Program C
Supervisor

Degree Program D
Supervisor

Degree Program E
Supervisor

Also, here is the diagram indicating the administrative structure of departmentments at Jyväskylä University. It should be pointed out that some abbreviations are used in this diagram. *Adm. Head* stands for Administrative head, and *S.A head* is used for Study Affair Head.

Figure 2. Administration Structure of Departments at Jyväskylä University

Dean

Vice Dean

Department A	Department B	Department C	Department D

Adm. Head   S.A Head   Adm. Head   S.A Head   Adm. Head   S.A Head   Adm. Head   S.A Head
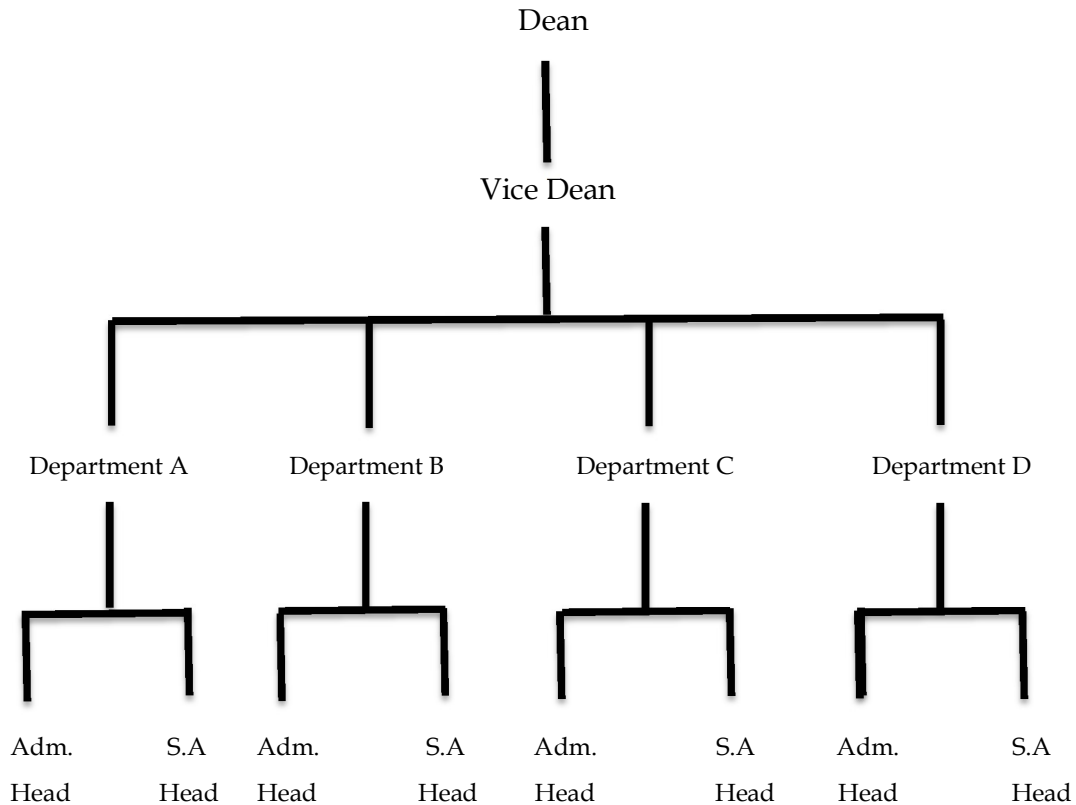
Some of the participants at Tampere University described their faculty structure as follows.

"Actually, when we had this new structure some years ago, before that we had departments but nowadays we have only faculties and then there's degree programs under the dean; so basically all the power is in dean's hands because all money and resources; because before that we had departments and they decided about their own resources and how to manage their money and what kind of people to hire, but now it's in the faculty level" (P.5, 34).

"Well, we have the dean, and then we have one vice dean at the moment the vice dean is basically concentrating on study affairs an education more than the dean

who is more concerned with human resources, management and also the research issues. We don't have departments, as I mentioned, we have degree programs. The degree programs do not have like a leader, but they have this person who is in charge of the program; but it's not the same thing as a head of department in Jyvaskyla University; it's more like taking care of the degree programs and studies in that sense" (P.6, 41).

In fact, department headship at Jyväskylä University is equivalent to faculty headship at Tampere University. The difference here is that in each departments of one faculty at Jyväskylä University two department heads are employed while at Tampere University there are only two heads for the whole faculty. The logic behind this management structure at Tampere University is to minimize the size of administration and instead optimize the performance. Grounded on the findings in this study, it can be said that faculty heads at Tampere University are much more motivated and satisfied with their position.

"Actually, I think this position is like, how to say that, I like to work and I enjoy my work" (P.5, 35).

"Traditionally, we used to have those heads of departments (at Tampere University) as well. It was something like, it was a job that somebody, some professors, always had to take and it was somebody's turn to take the things and take care of management for three or four years; so, obviously that was not very motivating necessarily if you just think that OK, now, that's my turn to take care of this. When I think of my position or the other heads of administration in faculties (at Tampere University), I think it's a bit different because we have applied for this job and I think it's pretty motivating to work for the faculty, with the dean and help him to develop the faculty. I think it's motivating" (P.6, 46).

In general, Leadership structure at Tampere University appears not to be so complex. A dean is responsible for the whole faculty and cooperates directly and continuously with a vice dean and two faculty heads; in fact, these four positions constitute the central decision making committee of a faculty. Program coordina-

tors, who have little authority and power, work closely with faculty heads in order to assist them in their management. On the other hand, leadership structure at Jyväskylä University tends to be so broad and expanded. Typically, a faculty is run by a dean and a vice dean; faculties are divided into departments, and each single department is managed by two department heads meaning that a wide circle of managers and leaders work in one faculty.

4.4   Academic leadership training

The participants of this study, who are taking the position of department headship, possess different specialties and come from various backgrounds. As stated before regarding the challenges of department heads, lack of leadership training before taking this position was a common experience among all the participants. According to the findings of this study, none of the participants received leadership training before commencing with their career as department heads. However, some of them have undergone on-the job training regarding academic leadership.

It is worth noting that participants at Tampere University have taken a management program called KOHA. KOHA, a non-degree program including 40 ECTS credits, educates university managers and administrators, along with university graduates and postgraduates on theoretical and practical issues regarding higher education administration. This program concerns both features of Finnish higher education management and administration in the international setting. Information about KOHA program can be easily found on the Website of Tampere University.

> "It (KOHA) is training for people working at the University in administration mainly. I think their group has a great impact on Finnish university administration because they have trained quite many people in Finland" (P.5, 39).

"I have done some education after that, I also have done the, [thinking] how could I translate it, KOHA studies; it's like a module. It was 40 credits altogether" (P.6, 43).

Regarding the effectiveness of KOHA program, Participant 6 pointed out some aspects of the program.

"I think it just gave me some perspectives; there were various issues like quality management, economics, and financing in the University that I wasn't that familiar with; of course, there were things that I was very familiar with, for instance, legislation part. But it perhaps gave me some insights and some new ideas" (44).

P.7 also shared some of her experiences in terms of the program's strengths and weaknesses.

"It was quite general, and somehow it was helpful because I got wider perspectives to this job, but in a specific question, I didn't get any answers. I think the big question is how to, in which direction I should develop these things because the University is in big changes just now; so it didn't give the way, the steps, the directions, in which direction we should develop our work and faculty life and so on" (52).

In fact, other participants either had not undergone any leadership and management training or had received training in the form of a one or two-day seminars or workshops. Here is worth notifying what was quoted by Gmelch (2000) in the literature review section. He stated that while seven years of experience is required for a faculty member to obtain the status of associate professorship and seven other years to reach the position of a full professor in the American university, how can we expect to educate and train a leader in a weekend seminar? Some of the participants reacted to the question regarding their experiences of leadership training in this way:

"In my case, I was always thinking that I would like to take a course where they could give me some kind of general, I don't know, competencies to … in my case, I have had no formal training being a supervisor or leader" (P.1, 3).

In response to the question of whether or not she had been taking or offered any formal leadership training, P.1 explained:

"Actually, not; [Laughter] that's an awful answer, but that is the truth. This is something that I have been talking a lot with the University Services that they should offer whenever they (leadership training programs) are" (7).

"We had training for a couple of days. At that point I was on a research leave; I wasn't able to attend. I think I might be the only person at the University that doesn't have any training for this position" (P.3, 25).

4.4.1   Importance of academic leadership training

As stated earlier, one of the reasons why the author intended to conduct this research topic was based on this unresolved question to him that despite the well-reputed and highly qualified education system in the primary and secondary level, why Finland's higher education is not so as famous as its elementary and secondary education? Why are Finnish universities not ranked among the top universities in the world? However, the answer to this question is multidimensional, and it concerns different aspects of higher education and government policies, the author came up with the hunch which suggests that one of the shortcomings of Finnish higher education system may lie in the shortages of academic leadership training.

As opposed to school leaders in Finland, higher education leaders are not obliged by law to take training courses and possess leadership expertise. Whereas the selection of school leaders in Finland is strict and requires specific leadership qualities and qualifications, regulations of leader selection in Finnish higher ed-

ucation do not appear to be stringent enough and emphasize on leadership expertise and training. Darling-Hammond & Rothman (2011) asserted that "By law, all school principals must be qualified teachers for the school they lead and must complete a specific course of academic training at the university. In most cases, this is done as part-time study while the person is teaching or working in the school. Some of the university programs are based on a peer-assisted leadership model, in which part of the training is done by shadowing and being mentored by the senior school principal" (P.19). According to what has been mentioned by Darling-Hammond & Rothman (2011), school leadership is considered a professional position and a very serious issue in Finnish education system. Some of the participants of the study pointed out the significance of higher education leadership training and the consequences arising as a result of lack of these types of training.

> "Those are the most difficult things I have faced. They are always related to people, and they are like behaviour or attitudes. I think that if I had had training, I think that it might help me that we have come through different kinds of difficult situations related to individual problems. How can you handle them so that you would have like different options? Because now it has been so that you have to learn it by yourself and now I try this one and next time I could try that one. It might be so that if you (have) like a tool box that you can try to find different ways to solve it. Because now you learn from your mistakes, Ok maybe I should find it that way or could I do it otherwise" (P.1, 4).

> "(with the help of leadership training) you can get new ideas, you start to estimate your own work or the workplace or the ways you're working in the company or the department" (P.4, 29).

> "It (leadership training) helps to have an idea of higher education broadly and to understand how this faculty relates to everything else in the higher education field" (P.6, 42).

Some other participants addressed the consequences which ensue from the insufficiency of leadership training.

"Actually, you just have to do it (leadership) in practice and it's like you are making a lot of mistakes of course, but you have to learn from the mistakes" (P.1, 3).

"If you don't get any kind of formal training or support for it (leadership tasks), you are totally lost with the budgeting or all kinds of legal questions at the beginning. It's really important that you will get this kind of formal packages that you feel safe when you are starting your work" (P.1, 6).

"There have always been people who are working in the faculty of physics or whatever and they have background in that field and not maybe any education at all in leadership, they can work (they are allowed to take the position). But maybe it would be better if they are people who have that kind of (leadership) education. Maybe they use much more time to do their job because they don't know and they don't have the (leadership) education" (P.5, 37).

In the critique of the leadership training seminars and their effectiveness, Participant 2 stated that:

"When it comes to really leadership, I cannot tell you any single thing or item I would have learned from those concerning leadership that I didn't know before" (P.2, 14).

He also added:

"It was helpful in terms of those regulations and practices and details; that gave me a lot of such detailed information, but not regarding leadership. That's a completely different thing, not that much. There were sort of lectures on that specific topic and somehow I didn't find anything new in those. I believe I would be exactly the same kind of head of a department without those lectures [Laughter]" (P.2, 15).

4.5   Recommendations

Within the last part of the interviews, the participants were asked to come up with some suggestions in terms of academic leadership training or what might be helpful to face the challenges they have already experienced. The participants' recommendations addressed different aspects of academic leadership. Some participants emphasized the importance of training leaders in terms of human resource management.

> "About training I somehow think good leadership is an attitude. It's very sort of psychological thing in a sense; how to deal with human beings. It is sometimes a difficult situation and to understand different sort of types of persons and have some kinds of tools to manage different kinds of people. I somehow think that I'm sure there are tactics to this end. I think it would help to understand these things that what the categories of different people are" (P.2, 18).

> "It could have more information on human resource management and that would be useful for people who work in the university and I think some basics of the finances, also, because you have to understand how we earn, the earning logic in the University. Maybe it could have some something about the internationalization because some tools, maybe, you can use for internationalizing this faculty or university" (P.6, 45).

Some of the participants believed that training programs ought to be in the form of a mentoring system and direct and constant cooperation with peers.

> "A peer network where they can have the discussion because no one can survive alone and think about the people alone. That would be highly important to, kind of, have some people you can have a discussion with and think about the big questions. I think some kind of a mentoring system would be good" (P.1, 9-10).

> "we should work towards the common goal, and new deans and heads of faculties should be aware of what are the university values, vision, mission; that should be

absolutely Ok for them because all faculties are parts of university, so it should be clearly important that they know where the university is heading and then they can know how their faculty or department can support. So, we should also have one common goal clear for everyone, and it shouldn't be so that, of course, you will read it from the paper; it should be so that we discuss it together. I would say that the big goal is very important that you feel you are part of that" (P.1, 10).

"I think the main thing is that there is (should be) a possibility to discuss with each other, with colleagues, with deans, with heads of the whole administration and (people from) these kinds of positions" (P.7, 53).

Participant 3 is of the opinion that leadership training must be obligatory for the faculty members who want to be selected as university leaders.

"Some kind of formal training should be compulsory for the academic leaders" (P.3, 24).

5   DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to shed light on the issue of professionalism in mid-level higher education leadership within two universities of Finland. The findings from the study of two Finnish universities suggest that the issue of academic leadership ought to be paid more attention to and broadly researched among other universities in Finland. The findings of this research also indicates that there has not been a systematic and regulated procedure for the selection of department heads in Jyväskylä and Tampere Universities. According to the findings, the selection of heads at these two universities appears to mainly rely on people's work experience in the faculty; and little attention is given to their leadership education and experience.

In this study, there was notable evidence indicating that lack of leadership expertise and training is commonplace among the selected department heads at these two universities. Nearly all of the participants in this study declared that they had not received any formal leadership training before taking the position of department headship. Due to this fact, most of them stated they had experienced tough and frustrating conditions at the very beginning of their tenure and felt bewildered by the circumstances they faced.

Since nearly most of the department heads attending this study have research and teaching backgrounds, they have no or little specialization in the field of academic management and leadership. As a result of this fact, they are not so much intrigued with this position, and they show reluctance to be in charge of a department. According to the findings of the study, the main reason for such reluctance is embedded in lack of leadership expertise and leadership education. In other words, the majority of the interviewed department heads are not inclined to their position mainly owing to the fact that they believe this position deviates them from their real interests and what they had always desired to do, which are research and teaching. Some bureaucratic amount of work which the department heads must undertake is seen as another reason for their lack of incentive. It is evident from the findings that department heads perceive they are

packed with an abundance of trivial paperwork and every-day administrative tasks which prevents them from exercising leadership. In addition, in some cases department headship is considered a part-time job; therefore, the heads of departments are supposed to deal with their own research agenda and teaching tasks along with their managerial duties.

Interestingly enough, unexpected findings from this study indicate that leadership structure can have profound effects on leaders' performance and the level of job satisfaction. As stated in the Result section, the two universities under study have adopted different leadership structures which in turn result in influencing leaders' attitudes and viewpoints toward their career. An appealing part of the findings in this regard is that the participants from Tampere University seem to be more experienced in administration and more satisfied with their job as compared to their counterparts at Jyväskylä University. It can be said that due to the small size administration at Tampere University, the view toward the faculty headship is more professional and the willingness to apply for this position is more than that of at Jyväskylä University.

Academic leadership is, nowadays, a focal point in most higher education institutions all around the world. There are several studies conducted on academic leadership concentrating on its different dimensions and levels. The present findings seem to be consistent with other research conducted by Dimici, Seggie, Hacifazlioğlu, & Caner (2016) which found almost similar results within the context of Turkey. In their research they claimed that department heads at Turkish universities encounter some problems including lack of motivation for the position, a huge amount of workload, lack of authority, and the pressure to accept the position of headship.

The findings in this study are subject to many limitations. Regarding the issue of professionalism in Finnish higher education in departmental leadership, the present study selected only two universities in Finland; and in each university only four department heads were interviewed. As mentioned earlier, universities in Finland enjoy enormous autonomy in order to decide on their internal administration (the Universities Act, Chapter 1, Section 3). Therefore, so as to

grasp a better image of the issue of professionalism of mid-level leaders at Finnish universities, more comprehensive research needs to be conducted. Another limitation of this study is the language barrier. Since few research has been conducted in this regard within the context of Finland and nearly all of them have been written in Finnish, the author had difficulty translating and understanding them well.

Overall, this study focuses on the issue of academic leadership in two universities of Finland and suggests that lack of leadership expertise and training might be one of the challenges that these universities need to deal with. This research also points to the importance of leadership training for department heads and the challenges which might be caused due to the lack of training and expertise. Further research is hence needed to study a larger number of department heads at various universities in Finland before a generalized conclusion can be drawn.

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APPENDICES

Interview questions:

1. Would you please let me know a bit about your professional background?
2. How do you view leadership?
3. In your own opinion what led you to take this position?
4. Can you say some about the challenges and difficulties you faced when you first took this position?
5. To what extent do you think it's important for leaders to be trained in terms of management and leadership?
6. Personally speaking, have you been offered any formal leadership program by the University? Or have you taken any?
7. In your opinion, what do you think to what extent leadership training can help academic leaders?
8. Taking leadership into account, in your opinion what kind of leadership qualities somebody should have in order to take the position of a head of a department?
9. What is your opinion on the difference between academic leadership as opposed to leadership in the other organizations, factories and industry?