

The Impact of Leadership Elements in Education Operational Excellence (EOE) On Working Culture in Higher Learning Institutions

Ahmad Zainuddin¹, Suhaila Mukhtar¹, Farah Hariaty Mohd Shukri¹ & Normadiana A. Manan¹

¹University College of Yayasan Pahang

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received Aug 15, 2022

Revised Oct 20, 2022

Accepted Nov 10, 2022

Keywords:

Leadership,
Education,
Operational Excellence,
Humility,
Working Culture

Conflict of Interest:

None

Funding:

None

ABSTRACT

The unprecedented situation requires a dynamic approach to building an organization's capability to survive and thrive in this turbulent time. Operational excellence is a concept commonly employed by manufacturing industries to increase productivity, produce high-quality performance, reduce cost, and generate a significant increase in profit via continuous process improvement practices. There is an emerging need for higher learning institutions to inculcate an excellent working culture through operational excellence that promotes organizational performance. This paper aims to examine the relationship between leadership elements embedded in EOE with working culture in higher learning institutions. The current study adopted a quantitative research design that focuses on the correlation between lead with humility and working culture. A correlation test is adopted, and quantitative descriptive analysis is used to analyse the data collected from 132 respondents. Based on the previous studies, it is expected that there is a significant relationship between *lead with humility* and working culture. Thus, the current study leads to significant findings of leadership elements, especially in this challenging endemic situation.

Corresponding Author: Suhaila Mukhtar, University College of Yayasan Pahang, Kampus Utama, Tanjung Lumpur, 26060 Kuantan, Pahang. Tel. +60-19-9880850. E-mail: suhaila@ucyp.edu.my.



© Ahmad Zainuddin, Suhaila Mukhtar, Farah Hariaty Mohd Shukri, Normadiana A. Manan

This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA 4.0 international license.

1. Introduction

The unprecedented situation has brought higher learning institutions to another milestone that prepares the organization for current and future needs. Education Operational Excellence (EOE) is a term coined to promote continuous process improvement in the educational sector. Education Operational Excellence is adapted from the framework or roadmap introduced in Jay Rusev and Salonitis' article, "*Operational excellence assessment framework for manufacturing companies*".

Four main principles form the EOE - cultural enablers, continuous process improvement, enterprise alignment, and results. Cultural enablers refer to the beliefs and values that can be measured via activities like campaigns and continuous training. Meanwhile, continuous process improvement refers to the activities or tasks that continuously go through an improvement process until a certain quality level is achieved. In addition, enterprise alignment is a principle meant to move the whole team in one direction so that the vision and mission of the organization are accomplished. The last principle that results in highlights the role of feedback made by the customer like students, stakeholders, parents, and the public that reflects the outcome of the continuous process improvement practiced.

To strengthen the four (4) principles, ten (10) elements are identified and adapted from Jay Rusev and Salonitis (2016); namely, respect every individual, lead with humility, seek perfection, embrace strategic and predictive thinking, focus on the process, assure quality at the source, create value for the customer, flow and

pull value, create constancy of purpose, and think systematically. EOE is hoped to promote cost reduction, increase productivity, achieve high levels of quality performance, and result in a significant increase in profit. Other elements emphasized in EOE are collaboration that promotes unity, the motivation that stimulates passion, and innovation that encourages creativity.

Operational excellence is defined as “A philosophy of the workplace where problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership results in the ongoing improvement of an organization. The process involves focusing on the customers’ needs, keeping the employee positive and empowered, and continually improving the current activities in the workplace.” Operational Excellence is mainly practiced by manufacturing industries due to global competition and to reduce operational costs in this difficult economic climate. Education operational excellence aims to improve the quality of learners’ experiences, enhance the staff’s productivity and performance, and sustain the organization’s growth.

Education Operational Excellence (EOE) is a principle that aims to improve the quality of learners’ experiences by creating an operational excellence environment that promotes effectiveness, performance, sustainability, and continuous process improvement activities while driving innovation, humility, and collaboration across organizations (Ahmad et al. 2021, pg.3).

1.1 Problem Statement

EOE is introduced to build an organization’s capability to survive and thrive in this fast-changing context as well as to understand the needs of the organization for now and future. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected most sectors including the educational sector. Thus, a dynamic approach is required for the industry to recover. Having that in mind, there is a need for an organization to strengthen its internal structure so that it remains relevant in this competitive environment. This is supported by Teece et al., (1997) and Ritchner & Lofsten (2014) that claimed that organizations must become dynamic and capable of facing the current environment to be resilient. Working culture is often seen as a driver of organizational performance (Saluy, 2019; Jeung & Yoon, 2016). To inculcate a healthy working culture (where the operational excellence principle is practiced); *lead with humility, which promotes organizational culture transformation*. This could be used as a benchmark and eye-opening feedback that will accelerate the organization’s performance. In addition, by applying a bottom-up, top-down, and lateral leadership style, *lead with humility* has received considerable attention in research studies in revealing the positive impact of leader humility on employees’ behaviors and performance (Xiaoye et. al., 2020). As organizations continue to rapidly evolve and struggle in this endemic era, embracing the element of *lead with humility* is crucial in cultivating the right working culture as a source of employee motivation to be productive (Thiele, 2017).

1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. to identify the impact of leadership elements (*lead with humility*) in Education Operational Excellence (EOE) in higher learning institutions.
2. to examine the relationship between leadership elements (*lead with humility*) in Education Operational Excellence (EOE) on working culture in higher learning institutions.

2. Literature Review

Leadership or leading with humility is often associated with communication in an organisation. Professional success is crucial at any position level, and it is described as the capability to communicate interpersonally (Morreale & Pearson, 2008). There are two major types of communication in an organisation such as formal and informal communication. Formal communication consists of upward communication, downward communication, and lateral communication. However, this study only emphasises two types of formal communication: upward (bottom-up) and downward (top-down) communication. Upward or bottom-up communication contains information or messages conveyed from the lower levels to the higher levels of the organisation hierarchy, for instance about work or tasks, suggestions for improvement, ideas for change, job-related activities and problems, thoughts about the organisation, other employees, or related issues. Meanwhile, downward, or top-down communication contains information or messages sent from the higher levels to the lower levels of the organisation hierarchy, for instance, explanation of procedures, goals, changes, orders, and appraisal of workers (DeVito, 2016).

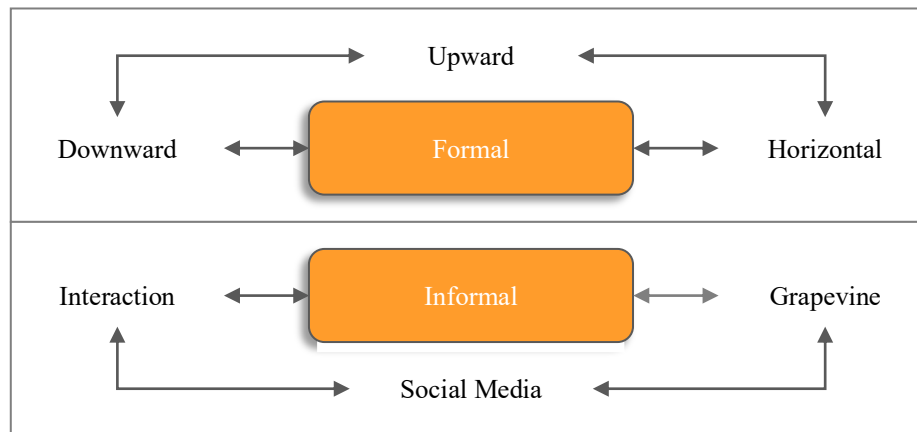


Figure 1. Four major types of workplace communication

2.1 Humility and Lead with Humility

2.1.1 Humility

According to Owen (2016), “*humus*” means humility which derives from the Latin word, which means the “earth”, and “*humi*” means “on the ground”. It is a theory that has been named “the fertile soil from which all other virtues grow”. The other definition of humility is “leading from the ground” by showing a leader’s behaviour that practices a “bottom-up” leadership style in an organisation that has gained great attention from many scholars.

McMahon (2020) stated that four guiding principles for the supervisory relationship highlight experience with humility and offering knowledge. Then, it is further described as five key touchstones in leaning into humility to foster supervisor humility that offers clear and loud sage practice guidance to all leaders in the organisation. In any organization, the supervision practice, of humility is constantly fundamental, foundational, and transformational. Humility can be a primary contributor to regular supervisory functions; thus, it can enhance the learning and performance process, which can positively affect the entire supervision situation. The conceptualization of humility is dynamic and developmental in nature, in which the qualities of supervisory function can be nurtured through humility-driven intentional (Watkins et al., 2018).

2.1.2 Lead with Humility

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, leading with humility is the most essential of leadership characteristics. This leadership characteristic can influence employee accountability. In that uncertain situation, leaders who prioritise trust, openness, and collaboration with their employees tend to stand out (Zhu and Smith, 2020). Qian et al., (2020), described leading with humility demonstrated by a leader to emphasise employee behaviours to improve team creativity and work productivity.

Owens et al., (2016), explained that the qualities led with humility as a leader's interpersonal characteristic that develops in a social context which is conveyed through accurately perceiving oneself, showing appreciation of employee strengths and contributions, and a tendency to be taught by others. Leaders who show high humility traits by displaying positive actions will lead to another action that will automatically strengthen the organisation's working culture. In an organisation, leading with humility requires one to know the background and capabilities of each person to identify their strengths so that they can be utilised to achieve the organisation's goals. Employees will feel free to respond creatively to their leaders, provide novel ideas, and be able to take high risks in their job if the leaders treat or lead with humility. In response, the leaders will show respectful actions by engaging with the employees in their work and spending the working time together. The leaders will acknowledge their own mistakes and the employee will receive a positive response related to their tasks or job.

Morris et. al., (2005), described those leaders who show high humility are more concerned with the interests of others than their interests, therefore they can stimulate a transformational leadership style that leads to employee trust, respect, and creativity. Leadership with humility in any type of organisation has been demonstrated by emphasising employee behaviours that can improve employee productivity such as feedback-seeking, voice behaviour, work creativity, and organisational citizenship behaviour (Hu et. al., 2018). Through leader humility, employees will get the advantage of a leader who recognizes their contributions and hard work. Therefore, the employees will feel grateful and repay with responsible actions such as being more accountable for their work which is also advantageous to the leader. The formation of the exchange link of positive action will lead to another positive action, and hence automatically strengthen the exchange process between the leader and employees (Aditya et. al., 2021).

There are several models, tools, and techniques that can be measured when implementing operational excellence to explain its wide concept. Organisational leadership is one of the operational excellence elements that focus on meeting customer expectations and application of various principles, tools, and systems in achieving feasible improvement related to the organisation's key performance system of measurement. Shingo Models (2017) explained that the dimension of cultural enablers consists of two main guiding principles: lead with humility and respect for every individual. These two philosophies are to make sure a safe working environment, develop employees and empower and engage with each employee in the organisation. The following are examples of systems and tools that drive behaviours and are aligned to principles as exemplified in the model. The systems are leadership development, individual development, communication, coaching, reward and recognition, education/training, recruitment and succession planning, training within the industry (on-the-job), daily management standard, idea or opinion sharing, recommendation and participation, community involvement, environment, health and safety, and accountability. The tools are personal development plans, arrangements with educational institutions, lean training curriculum and materials, suggestion forms and measures, meetings/huddles, community open houses, and fundraisers.

2.2 Operational Excellence

Operational Excellence (OE) is a broadly common term found in the strategic management area (Peter, 1980), in applying the scientific method to achieve organisational goals. Operational excellence is greatly crucial for the organisation's evolution of all types or sizes of organizations, due to the quality characteristics, efficiency, and effectiveness of the organisation (Aguilera et. al, 2019).

In figure 2, Rusev et. al., (2016) described operational excellence as an enterprise-wide practice based on accurate principles that can be classified under four main principles: 1) Cultural Enablers, 2) Continuous Process Improvement, 3) Enterprise Alignment, and 4) Results. To achieve operational excellence, organisations must manage to accomplish the standard of high development level and significant achievement in four main principles, so that it can be assessed externally by qualified institutions or consultants. Stimulating organisational performance depends on many elements, mainly operational excellence strategies. In our study, we're analysing only one element that is led with humility in the cultural enabler's principle.

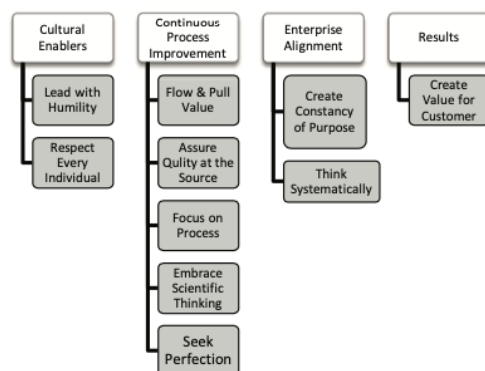


Figure 2. Operational excellence dimensions and underlying principles

With the need for operational excellence in Indian higher education by the year 2020, India has targeted to become the world's earliest country with a 64% working-age group population. On the other side where the relevant curriculum is critical, additional parameters such as educating large volumes of students through technology by the administration effectiveness, process mapping of institutional functions, and changing pedagogies are equally critical to bringing quality and expanding reach in education. New information and communication technologies, particularly web technology, can be used in higher education to enhance quality and promote operational excellence in higher education (Marda et. al., 2013). Overall, new technologies can profoundly impact higher education (Agarwal and Pawan, 2006).

In Moroccan universities and high schools, the concept and tools of operational excellence are planned to train and educate future managers to become familiar with it. In Moroccan academic programs, the integration of the operational excellence concept is one of the initial steps required in ensuring that qualified managers can develop the competitiveness of Moroccan companies at the national and international levels. The challenge can be met; however, it requires several educational tactical actions, which need strengthening efforts from all factors that are affected by this project. Organisational performance can be stimulated by various factors, mainly in operational excellence tactics or strategies (Elourat et. al., 2011).

According to Roslina (2018), operational excellence is very familiar to manufacturing and services organizations, including private higher education institutions in Malaysia and overseas, specifically in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Scandinavian countries. Nevertheless, for public universities in Malaysia like Universiti Teknologi Mara (UITM), it is something of a novelty. Operational excellence is fundamental to organisational leadership, employee teamwork, and decision-making or problem-solving impacting organisational continuous improvement by aiming at employee empowerment, customer needs, and optimising work activities in the process. In a university context, the university must ensure they do the process right without or minimum errors as possible. When doing the right process without any mistakes, could help the university to meet the set objectives, by lowering waste and to turn out to be cost-effective. An organisation process-centric is focusing on managing, monitoring, documenting, and performance improvement of its process outcomes.

Ahmad (2021) introduced *Education Operational Excellence (EOE)* at the University College of Yayasan Pahang (UCYP) 2021. He emphasises that education operational excellence at UCYP is a principle that aims to improve the quality of learners' experiences by creating an operational excellence environment that promotes effectiveness, performance, sustainability, and continuous process improvement activities while driving innovation, humility, and collaboration across the organisation. The aims of education operational excellence at UCYP are to improve the quality of learners' experiences, enhance the staff's productivity and performance, and sustain the organisation's growth. Operational excellence involves the organisational culture of the company, where employees could identify problems and solve them analytically (Aguilera, 2019).

2.3 Working Culture

Malaysia is one of the countries that have a unique work culture, in which it is a rare working experience for the people who work in Malaysia. In many organisations or institutions, workplace culture is often perceived as a major contributor to organisational performance. Healthy or positive working culture can be a motivation factor for productive employees, while unhealthy working culture can create failures and unproductive employees. There are a variety of issues regarding workplace cultures faced by most leaders and employees in organisations. Encouraging the right working culture is crucial in any work situation, especially during the pandemic COVID-19.

Culture is the arrangement of different attributes that express an organisation and differentiate the firm from another one (Forehand and Von Gilmer, 1964). According to Hofstede (1980), culture is the collective thinking of minds which creates a difference between the members of one group from another. Work culture is identified by Triguno (2006), as a philosophy that is created on the interpretation of life as values into the habits, properties, and driving strengths, established in the life of a community group or organisation, then influenced by the attitude toward beliefs, ideas, opinions, and actions that marked as "work". Schein (2009) views the work culture characteristics by reflecting the aspects of organisational culture, including perceived working behavioural regularities, norms, main values, philosophy, rules, and atmosphere. He relates the relationship between leadership influences on the work culture, "work culture and leadership are two sides of the same coin and cannot understand one without the other".

Work culture is an organisational concept of management that manages employees' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions, about the principles and practices that need to be followed by the organization (Bayot et al., 2020). Work culture is associated with several aspects, and it determines the importance of work culture which requires both attention to the organisation's production efficiency and the relationship among people in the organisation thoroughly (Tran, 2017). Every organisation has its own common goal which is to create a distinctive work culture from other companies and to encourage its employees to be creative and innovative (Stimpson and Farquharson, 2014). Work culture is a key factor affecting employee commitment and performance (Asril et al., 2019). Based on his study in human resource development, he added that if the employees have a high work culture and commitment to work, they can excel in the fields and are expected to affect the employee performance in the organisation in general. The higher the work culture, the more employee work commitments will increase in the regional work unit of the City Government of Baubau.

According to Rachman (2017), work culture is defined as a practice that employees feel suitable for, and it means uniting. He added that the problem with the organizational work culture continually becomes a phenomenon because the employees' need and aspiration has not met their expectation. In his study, he found that the working culture positively influences employee performance through job satisfaction. He indicated that the existing working culture can change the employees' behaviour and attitudes to increase high work satisfaction and a healthier working environment. The development of work culture dimensions adjusted to the organization's needs, specifically to: (1) like challenging work, (2) high willingness and determination, (3) cooperate with colleagues, (4) receive direction and input from the leader, (5) high innovative and initiative, (6) high result oriented.

More research has been conducted in this research area to comprehend the working culture's nature and ability in motivating the employees' working performance. Therefore, the leaders and managers are suggested to cultivate a strong working culture in the organisation and to improve overall employee and organisation performance (Shahzad et. al., 2012). A few examples were found in several organisations in which positive working culture was practised in their organisations. For instance, the founders of Southwest Airlines and Walmart believed that strong working culture is a key factor in their businesses' achievement (Flamholtz and Randle, 2011), and Apple Inc. and Google LLC also identified their positive working culture as the ultimate source of sustainable competitive advantage (Simoneaux and Stroud, 2014). Google's working culture is distinctive from other organizations. The topmost valuable lessons to learn from Google's work culture that we should understand are: (1) accept mistakes and correct them, (2) develop exponential thinking, (3) build skillful talent, and (4) create an exciting work environment (Scott, 2008).

A Malaysia report in PwC's Global Culture Survey 2021, defined working culture as a behaviour pattern self-sustaining, its components include instinctive, emotional responses, and repetitive habits. It is supported by the findings of a global survey whereby there were 3000 respondents of which 258 were Malaysians across various job levels and industries. Some 86% of respondents say their organisation's culture must change in three to five years for their career growth and success, and to retain valuable people. About 75% of senior management respondents believe they are role modeling purpose, values, and working culture in their organisation. About 69% of respondents think that their workplace culture has been a source of competitive advantage throughout the pandemic. And 86% of respondents agreed that they are interested in learning advanced skills to support the organisation's success. Another research from the O.C. Tanners Institute 2022 Global Working Culture Report identified job tasks that required creative thinking or high focus are easier to do at their home, while tasks that required teamwork and connection are easier and more productively to do in the office.

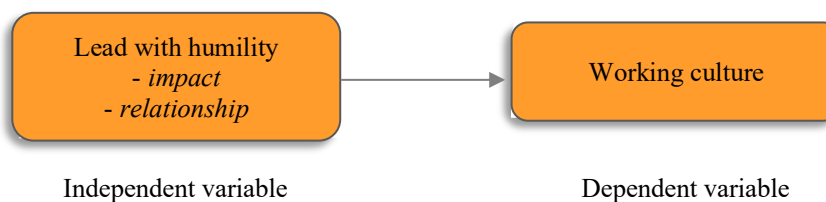


Figure 3. Diagram the relationship between the independent variable (lead with humility) and the dependent variable (working culture).

3. Method

The methodologies segment clearly explained the methods and instruments utilized within the study. Methodology varies across the studies; however, a comprehensive description of the methods enables the reader to analyse the reliability and validity of the results. It also can serve as a guideline for other researchers to replicate the study. According to Yin (2014), understanding research methodologies and designs is crucial because each approach to the study process differs from the others. Hence, the implementation of the research design will be further discussed and together with the method of data collection presented as evidence for the study. Moreover, the sampling design, research instrument, and instrument measurement involved in this research will be provided and explained thoroughly in this section.

3.1 Research Design

Research design is a plan or strategy for developing data by collecting, quantifying, and investigating data to address the research questions (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). This current study adopted a quantitative research design to examine The Impact of Leadership Elements in Education Operational Excellence (EOE) on Working Culture in Higher Learning Institutions. The use of quantitative research helps researchers numerically analyse the data immediately. The selection of this method was made considering that during this study was carried out, the country was still during a pandemic, and it was difficult for the researcher to conduct interview sessions, etc. As discussed, the focus group consists of workers which describe the population in the University College of Yayasan Pahang (UCYP) which are among Academic staff (L1, L2, L3, L4) and non-academic staff (Management and Professionals and Executive).

3.2 Sampling Frame

A sampling frame is suitable for identifying a listing of each element in the population, although the tendency that the data were not updated/current, or the latest document given is high. As defined by Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the population from which the sample is taken is physically represented by the sampling frame. Thus, researchers decided to collect precise population data from the Human Resources Department and not only depend on data in the staff portal.

3.3 Target Population

The population of this study included Academic (L1, L2, L3, L4) and Non-Academic staff (Assistant Manager, Senior Executive, and Executive). The total population of UCYP staff consisted of 342 from all levels including the supporting groups. However, based on the implementation that has been done the researcher has decided to exclude the supporting group from the target population and focuses on other categories only. This is because Educational Operation Excellence (EOE) has not been applied yet to that group, therefore only 192 were selected as the target population.

Table 1. *The target population at the University College of Yayasan Pahang*

Staff Category	Total Number of Staff	Target Population
Academic Staff	140	140
Non-Academic Staff	202	52
Total	342	192

3.4 Sampling Technique

To answer the research objective, the researcher decided to use stratified random sampling as the sampling technique. When respondents are known to be unequal on a population variable, stratified random sampling is a probability sampling technique that uses a random sample procedure in a study (Salkind, 2018).

3.5 Sample Size

The sample size plays a significant role in any experiential study in which it aims to make inferences about a population from a sample. A study shows that using a sample will produce more reliable results rather than using the entire population. Based on Roscoe's table (1975), the sample size of UCYP's respondents is 192 over 342 of the population size.

3.6 Data Collection

In this study, a questionnaire will be distributed to selected staff through an online platform using Google Forms. The questionnaire was constructed in *Bahasa Melayu* to ensure that all employees or respondents were able to understand its meaning clearly. Respondents were given one (1) week to answer, and follow-ups were made in order of getting a high response return rate. Although the questionnaire was constructed using Google Forms, a description of the study was explained briefly in the first section. The respondents were introduced to the research topic to avoid any uncertainty about the study. This description is expected to inspire respondents to contribute to the study which aims to gain a quality result. Hence, after the data collection is completed, the information will be analysed to ensure the completeness, consistency, and reliability of the data. The next step will involve converting Google Form Analysis and an analytical analysis will be conducted.

3.7 Instrument

A questionnaire acted as the instrument for this study which consisted of Section I and Section II. The demographic information of the respondent is in Section I and was adapted from Nilgun (2017), and Mun et al., (2017). Respondents need to state their gender, age, group of respondents, and category of respondents. Meanwhile, Section II of Lead with Humility was adopted from Septiandari (2021), C. Edwards Watkins Jr., (2018), Xiaoye Qian (2020), and Shingo Model (2017). Hence it was a closed-ended questionnaire, and the variable was measured by a 5-point Likert scale: (5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree, and 1=strongly disagree).

3.8 Validity of Instrument

The extent to which an instrument measures what should be anticipated, measured, and intended is referred to as validity. Therefore, the instrument for the content needs to be tested by experts. All comments and feedback were given by the experts to ensure that the instrument is in line with the research objectives and research questions. Apart from that, this step is to get their opinion on the suitability of the instrument in ensuring it includes the variable being measured, and one way to eliminate content validity. As for this study, the questionnaire was validated by Associate Professor Dr. Norasiha Abdul Hamid and Associate Professor Dr. Ruzita Manshor who are management experts. They oversaw advising the questions structured before distributing them to the respondents. Comments made by the experts were very much related to the terms used in the questionnaire.

3.9 Reliability of Instrument

Reliability refers to whether we were able to have the same answer by using an instrument to measure something more than once. For this study, the researcher conducted a reliability test-retest to measure the

instrument's reliability. Whereby a pilot study has been carried out on 30 respondents using the same questionnaire to ensure accuracy and stable and consistent results.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Qualitative Findings

Operational Excellence is mainly practiced by manufacturing industries due to global competition and to reduce operational costs in a difficult economic climate. The present study adopted the practice of Operational Excellence in higher learning institutions. Table xx illustrates the flow of Education Operational Excellence in UCYP.

The exploration of EOE in UCYP started in December 2020 with a talk given by the president of a multinational company that its established in the automotive industry started two decades ago. Committed to delivering excellence and sustained value creation through products and services, its working culture is driven by forward-thinking, progressive, and innovative practices. The values, measures, practices, and insights on business excellence via Operational Excellence were shared with 150 UCYP staff via an online platform.

Approximately two months were spent working on the basic structure of EOE which comprises studies on other researchers' data and information sources. Since the secondary data are already authenticated, researchers decided to adapt the existing structure made by Jay Rusev and Salonitis (2016). The consideration elements of the initial EOE structure were made about the present vision and mission of the organization.

Later, a workshop was conducted in February 2021 that aims to inculcate the values and practices of Education Operational Excellence among the team. The elements emphasized in the EOE workshop were collaboration, humility, and innovation that promote effectiveness, performance, sustainability, and continuous process improvement. In addition, the workshop managed to gather information on commitments made by all departments via activities planned to implement the principles and elements of EOE. In short, apart from disseminating the essence of the EOE concept, the workshop resulted in building, filtering, and compiling EOE documents. The documents were converted into a blueprint or an early plan as a reference to the organization's future planning and activities related to EOE. Ultimately, the EOE is hoped to promote cost reduction, increase productivity, achieve a high level of quality performance and result in a significant increase in profit.

A blueprint on Education Operational Excellence (EOE): Towards a Prestigious University was published in August 2021. Currently, the organization requires at least six months to kick start the implementation part. Implementation, evaluation, and reflection are the next steps to the EOE concept before the idea and its objectives can be measured. In other words, the present study's findings on one of the EOE elements, Lead with Humility, is one of the significant initiatives to support the EOE concept and its implementation strategies.

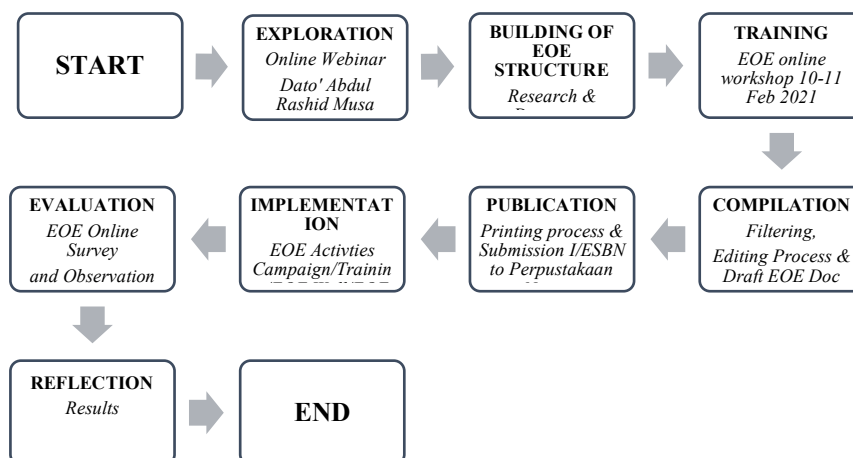


Figure 4. EOE Flow

4.2 Response Rate

The questionnaires in this study were electronically distributed to a total of 192 employees at the University College of Yayasan Pahang. The process of distribution and collection took approximately two weeks. If the response rate is 60% - 70%, it is considered a good response (Cohen, 1988). For this study, a total of 132 questionnaires were collected equivalent to 69%.

Table 2. *Response Rate*

	<i>N</i>	Response Rate (%)
Total Questionnaires Distributed	192	100.0
Number of Questionnaires Collected	132	69.0
Number of Questionnaires not Returned	60	31.00

4.3 Profile of the Respondents

The respondents' profile was analysed from the respondents' demographic profile. The variables related are gender, age, race, category of respondents, and group of respondents. In table 3 it was found that 34.1 percent of them were male as opposed to 65.9 percent female.

Table 3. *Respondents' Gender*

	Frequency	Percent
Male	87	65.9
Female	45	34.1
Total	132	100.0

Table 4. *Respondents' Age Group*

	Frequency	Percent
18-24	19	14.4
25-34	35	26.5
35-44	53	40.2
45 and above	25	18.9
Total	132	100.0

Table 4 illustrates the age group of the respondents, and it shows the respondents aged between 18-24 years old is 14.4 percent, and those respondents in age between 25-34 years old 26.5 percent. Other respondents between the ages of 35-44 account for 40.2 percent and 45 years old and above, which is up to 18.9 percent. The highest numbers of respondents were in the age group 35-44 years old group that participated in this study.

Table 5. *Respondents' Race*

	Frequency	Percent
Malay	122	92.4
Chinese	6	4.5
Indian	3	2.3
Others	1	0.8
Total	132	100.0

Table 5 shows the respondents' race, and it shows that Malays respondents are 92.4 percent, Chinese respondents are 4.5 percent, Indian respondents are 2.3 percent, and 0.8 percent are categorised as other races.

Table 6. *Respondents' Group*

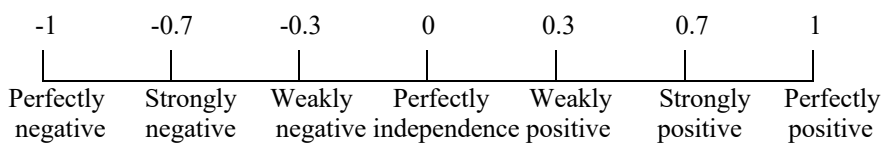
	Frequency	Percent
Academic	53	40.2
Non-Academic	79	59.8
Total	132	100.0

Table 6 illustrates the group of the respondents of academic and non-academic groups. It shows that the academic group is 40.2 percent and another 59.8 percent fall under the non-academic group.

4.4 Correlational Analysis

A Pearson correlation matrix measures interval or ratio level by indicating the bivariate relationships' strength, direction, and significance among all variables. The correlation results from measuring the variations in one variable to another (Sekaran, 2020). Pearson Correlation Coefficients were used to examine both the relationship between lead with humility and the working culture in the higher learning institution in answering the research objectives in chapter 1 of this study.

Based on Saunders et al., (2009), measure the strength or significance of two ranked numerical variables' linear relationship by using a correlation coefficient, that can be used on any value between -1 and +1. A *perfectly positive* correlation coefficient value shows a +1 value, while a *perfectly negative* correlation coefficient value shows a -1 value. However, a perfect independent variable means a value of 0. In addition, in this study, the correlation coefficient interpretation is to explain the strength of all variables' relationships (Salkind, 2012). The correlation coefficient interpretation is based on Saunders (2009) and Salkind (2012) are shown in figure 1 and table 7

**Figure 5.** *Values of the correlation coefficient based on Saunders (2009)***Table 7.** *Correlation Coefficient Interpretation (Salkind, 2012)*

Coefficient of Correlations	Interpretation of correlation
.8 and 1.0	Very strong
.6 and .8	Strong
.4 and .6	Moderate
.2 and .4	Weak
.0 and .2	Very weak

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationships between two variables of an independent variable and a dependent variable. Referring to the data analysis, the statistical data were used to calculate Pearson's Moment Correlation Coefficients in examining these two variables. Thus, the relationship between lead with humility (independent variable) and working culture (dependent variable) was very significant. The correlation between leadership elements (lead with humility) and Education Operational Excellence (EOE) in higher learning institutions is .80 and is perceived to be a strong correlation.

It was supported by questionnaire findings that most of the respondents agreed (more than 70 percent) with the statements such as:

- Leaders show concern over staff strength and capabilities.
- Leaders show their support in staff career development
- Leaders recognize their staff's knowledge and skills
- Leaders show that they're willing to learn from their staff
- Leaders show that they will admit their mistakes
- Leaders show guidance to their staff in promoting the positive working culture
- Leaders show their concern for staff welfare, health, and safety

5. Conclusion

This paper outlines the Education Operational Excellence (EOE) that was first introduced and implemented by UCYP in 2021. It is another milestone for the institution to take an important step in transforming into a full-fledged university in the coming years. The term education operational excellence is to promote continuous process improvement in an educational sector. This approach to education operational excellence has met the objectives of identifying the impact and relationship between leadership elements (lead with humility) in education operational excellence on working culture in higher learning institutions. It can be shown from the findings in this study that there is a significant correlation between the impact and relationship between leadership elements on working culture. Leadership features reflected from lead with humility create a positive and healthy working environment as well as encourage staff participation and contribution. In other words, this concept of Education Operational Excellence is vital in higher learning institutions whereby practising humility at the managerial level or supervisory function through humility-driven intention can contribute to positive working culture. In addition, this paper can be provided as an initial step or as an introduction for the readers to identify and explore the related topic of Education Operational Excellence in higher learning institutions. Further investigations could be made in future studies related to other elements related to Lead with Humility in Education Operational Excellence (EOE) that possibly affect the working culture in Higher Learning Institutions, like respecting every individual.

References

- Ab Wahid, R. (2018). Operational excellence through process improvement at a public university. *International Review of Business Research Papers*, 14(2), 45-55.
- Agarwal, P. (2006). Higher education in India: the need for change. *Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations*, (180). Available at: http://www.icrier.org-/pdf/icrier_wp180_higher_education_in_india_.pdf
- Aguilera, J. T., & Ruíz, N. L. T. (2019). Operational excellence: concept review and meaning restructuration. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management*, 2019, 678-688.
- Asril, A., Syarif, M., Kadir, A., & Jamal, J. (2019). The Effects of Human Resource Development, Work Culture, Work Environment on Employee Performance Mediated by Work Commitments: A Study on the City of Baubau Government, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. *International Journal of Education, Learning and Development*, 7(12), 24–38.
- Marlon, B., Prasanna, T. & Sharts-Hopko, N. (2020). *Work Culture*. StatPearls Publishing.
- Bougie, R., & Sekaran, U. (2020). *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach* (8th Ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Carvalho, A. M., Sampaio, P., Rebentisch, E., & Saraiva, P. (2017). Operational Excellence to Achieve an Enduring Capacity to Change–Revision and Evolution of a Conceptual Model. *Procedia Manufacturing*, 13, 1328-1335.
- Cress, C. M. (2009). *Curricular Strategies for Student Success and Engaged Learning* [PowerPoint slides].
- DeVito, Joseph, A. (2015). *The Interpersonal Communication Book*, Hunter College of the City University of New York. Pearson.
- Edgeman, R. (2019). *The Shingo Model: Foundations of Operational Excellence and Supporting Tools*. Routledge Productivity Press. 10.1201/b22037-23.
- Elouarat, L. & Saadi, J. & Kouiss, K. (2011). *The teaching of Operational Excellence in Moroccan Universities and High Schools is a Major Lever for A Competitive Moroccan Company*.
- Flamholtz, E., & Randle, Y. (2011). *Corporate Culture: The Ultimate Strategic Asset*. Stanford University Press.
- Forehand, G. A., & Von Haller, G. (1964). Environmental variation in studies of organizational behaviour. *Psychological Bulletin*, 62(6), 361-382.
- Gólcher-Barguil, L. A., Nadeem, S. P., & Garza-Reyes, J. A. (2019). Measuring operational excellence: an operational excellence profitability (OEP) approach. *Production Planning & Control*, 30(8), 682-698.
- Hanna, L. (2019, Feb 12). *What It Takes to Achieve Operational Excellence*. KaiNexus. <https://blog.kainexus.com/improvement-disciplines/operational-excellence/what-ittakes-to-achieve-operational-excellence>.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture and organizations. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 10(4), 15-41.

- Hollweck, T. (2015). Robert K. Yin. (2014). Case Study Research Design and Methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 30(1), 1-5.
- Hu, J., Erdogan, B., Jiang, K., Bauer, T. N., & Liu, S. (2018). Leader humility and team creativity: the role of team information sharing, psychological safety, and power distance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 103(3), 313-323. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/apl0000277>.
- Jung, H. S., & Yoon, H. H. (2016). What does work mean to hospitality employees? the effects of meaningful work on employees' organizational commitment: the mediating role of job engagement. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 53, 59-68.
- Marda, V. & Mantri, A. (2013). Operational Excellence in Indian Higher Education: Renewed Focus on Roles of Enablers. *Conference: IEEE Conference on Information Management in the Knowledge Economy (IMKE 2013)*, 123-126.
- McMahon, A. (2020). Five Reflective Touchstones to Foster Supervisor Humility. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 39, 178-197. 10.1080/07325223.2020.1827332.
- Moktadir, M. A., Dwivedi, A., Rahman, A., Chiappetta Jabbour, C. J., Paul, S. K., Sultana, R., & Madaan, J. (2020). An Investigation of Key Performance Indicators for Operational Excellence Towards Sustainability in The Leather Products Industry. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 29(8), 3331-3351.
- Morreale, S. P., & Pearson, J. C. (2008). Why communication education is important: the centrality of the discipline in the 21st century. *Communication Education*, 57(2), 224-240.
- Morris, J. A., Brotheridge, C. M., & Urbanski, J. C. (2005). Bringing Humility to Leadership: Antecedents and Consequences of Leader Humility. *Hum. Relations* 58, 1323–1350. DOI: 10.1177/0018726705059929.
- Mun, C. S., Ying, C. T. H., Lew, S., Wei, T. X., & Ning, T. Y. (2017). *The Relationship Between Work Environment and Job Satisfaction in Hotel Industry*. University Tunku Abdul Rahman.
- Neil J. S. (2017). *Exploring Research, Global Edition*. Pearson Education.
- Nilgün, A. V. C. I. (2017). The relationship between coworker supports, quality of work life and wellbeing: an empirical study of hotel employees. *Uluslararası Yönetim İktisat ve İşletme Dergisi*, 13(3), 577-590.
- Ojha, S. K. (2015). Operational excellence for sustainability of Nepalese industries. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 189, 458-464.
- Owens, B. P., & Hekman, D. R. (2016). How does leader humility influence team performance? exploring the mechanisms of contagion and collective promotion focus. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(3), 1088-1111.
- Owens, B. P., Johnson, M. D., and Mitchell, T. R. (2013). Expressed humility in organizations: implications for performance, teams, and leadership. *Organ. Sci.* 24, 1517–1538. doi: 10.1287/orsc.1120.0795.
- Pedersen, K. L., Ziegler, M. J., & Holt, L. D. (2015). Striving for operational excellence in higher education: a case study implementing lean for distance learning. *Quality Approaches in Higher Education*, 6(2), 41-48.
- Peter, S. (1980). The Fifth Discipline. *The Art & Practice of Learning Organization*. Doubleday Currence.
- OC Tanner. Retrieved from 2022 *Global Culture Report* | O.C. Tanner (octanner.com). <https://www.octanner.com/uk/global-culture-report.html>. 2022 Global Culture Report.
- PwC's Global Culture Survey 2021 (Malaysia report) <https://www.pwc.com/my/en/publications/2021/pwc-global-culture-survey-2021-malaysia-report.html>.
- Qian, X., Zhang, M., & Jiang, Q. (2020). Leader humility, and subordinates' organizational citizenship behavior and withdrawal behaviour: exploring the mediating mechanisms of subordinates' psychological capital. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(7), 2544.
- Rachman, M.M. (2017). The influence of work culture on job satisfaction and performance: a study on the employees of the Bank Jatim in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 9, 30-39.
- Richtnér, A., & Löfsten, H. (2014). Managing in turbulence: how the capacity for resilience influences creativity. *R&D Management*, 44(2), 137-151.
- Rusev, S. & Salonitis, K. (2016). Operational Excellence Assessment Framework for Manufacturing Companies. *Procedia CIRP*, 55, 272-277. 10.1016/j.procir.2016.08.026.

- Salkind, N. J. (2012). *Exploring Research*. Hoboken.
- Saluy, A. B., Prawira, B., & Buntaran, D. F. A. A. (2019). The influence of leadership, working culture, and working environment for the ministry of administrative reform and bureaucracy. *International Journal of Business and Economic Affairs*, 4(5), 224-234.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students*. Pearson Education.
- Schein, Edgar H. 2009. *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*. (Vol. 158). John Wiley & Sons.
- Scott, V. (2008). *Google*. ABC-CLIO.
- Sehnem, S., Jabbour, C. J. C., Pereira, S. C. F., & de Sousa Jabbour, A. B. L. (2019). Improving sustainable supply chains performance through operational excellence: circular economy approach. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, 149, 236-248.
- Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2016). *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Septiandari, A., Samian, S., & Riantoputra, C. (2021). Leader humility and employees' accountability during the pandemic. *International Research Journal of Business Studies*, 14(1), 13-26.
- Shahzad, F., Luqman, R. A., Khan, A. R., & Shabbir, L. (2012). Impact of organizational culture on organizational performance: an overview. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 3(9), 975-985
- Simoneaux, S., & Stroud, C. (2014). A strong corporate culture is key to success. *Journal of Pension Benefits*, 22(1), 51-53.
- Stimpson, P., & Farquharson, A. (2014). *Cambridge International AS and A Level Business Coursebook with CD-ROM*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tallyfy, (2021) *What is Operational Excellence (10 Principles)*. <https://tallyfy.com/guides/videos/operational-excellence>.
- Teece, D. J., Pisano, G., & Shuen, A. (1997). Dynamic capabilities and strategic management. *Resources, Firms, and Strategies: A Reader in the Resource-Based Perspective*, 268.
- Teece, D. J., Pisano, G., & Shuen, A. (1997). Dynamic capabilities and strategic management. *Strategic management journal*, 18(7), 509-533.
- Tran, S. K. (2017). Google: A reflection of culture, leader, and management. *International Journal of Corporate Social Responsibility*, 2(1), 1-14.
- Triguno. (2006) *Budaya Kerja*. Golden Terayon Press.
- Von Thiele, U. S., Hasson, H., & Tafvelin, S. (2016). Leadership training as an occupational health intervention: Improved safety and sustained productivity. *Safety Science*, 81, 35-45.
- Watkins Jr, C. E. (2020). Relational humility and clinical supervision: on hypotheses, method, and measurement. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 39(2), 148-167.
- Watkins, Jr, Clifton & Hook, Joshua & Mosher, David & Callahan, Jennifer. (2018). Humility in clinical supervision: fundamental, foundational, and transformational. *The Clinical Supervisor*. 38(1), 58-78.
- Zainuddin, A. (2021). *UCYP Education Operational Excellence 2021: Towards a Prestigious University*. UCYP Press.
- Zhu, A., & Smith, J. (2020). *Leadership in A Covid-19 World: The Power of Humility*. Retrieved from <https://www.spencerstuart.com/leadership-matters/2020/may/leadership-in-a-covid-19-world-the-power-of-humility>.

The Authors:

Ahmad Haji Zainuddin, Vice Chancellor of University College of Yayasan Pahang (UCYP), Malaysia. His research interest includes Design Management, Innovation, and Educational Leadership Management. E-mail: ahmadz@ucyp.edu.my.

Suhaila Haji Mukhtar, Assistant Vice Chancellor (Branding Communication and Corporate Diplomacy) at University College of Yayasan Pahang, Malaysia. Among her research interests are Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), Education Management and Development, Task Complexity, and Communication. E-mail: suhaila@ucyp.edu.my.

Farah Hariaty Mohd Shukri, Assistant Manager (Branding Communication and Corporate Diplomacy) at University College of Yayasan Pahang, Malaysia. Her research interest includes Education Management and Development, and Organizational Systems Management. E-mail: farah_hariaty@ucyp.edu.my.

Normadiana A. Manan (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7526-3065>), Lecturer at Faculty of Management and Research Management Centre, University College of Yayasan Pahang, Malaysia. Her research interest includes Management and Human Resource Management. E-mail: normadiana@ucyp.edu.my.