

## Qualities of Effective Academic and Corporate Leaders in Pakistan

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In any given organization, leadership maintains important and significant influences on its followers and organizations (Abdullah, 2011) to directly affecting performance and growth of employees (Popa, 2012). The purpose of this study was to map, compare and contrast the qualities of academic and corporate leaders. A purposive sample of 100 students, 50 faculty members and 50 corporate sector employees, was selected from different academic and corporate organizations and were asked to provide leadership qualities. Participants were asked to write down and rank order 10 qualities of an effective academic or corporate leader. Frequent qualities were subjected to further analysis through multidimensional scaling (MDS) and cluster analysis. Two clusters of academic leader qualities and three clusters of corporate leader qualities emerged. MDS model for academic leader qualities indicated stress value of .18 and  $RSQ = .92$ . Both the values suggest that two dimensional model fit the respective data set (Kruskal, 1964). Results revealed similarity in qualities between two leaderships was greater than differences, suggesting that a global outlook could be generated in academic leaders by goading and manipulating those qualities revealed by the "quality" map as reflection of a corporate leader.

*Keywords:* leadership qualities, cognitive mapping, academia, corporate sector, cluster analysis

Academic leadership, practiced in academic (Moore & Diamond, 2000) and higher educational institutes (Shaw, 2013), is considered to be different from corporate leadership, exercised in business management and entrepreneurial institutes (Goldberg, 2013) and comprises of the executives and managers who run a company (Raven, 2016). This indicates that leadership is largely a context based phenomenon that varies across situations, settings. Harris (2005) considers academic leadership as an 'umbrella phrase' which can change its meaning in different contexts for example, in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century "educational leadership" was used for grade schools or at best titular leaders (Coleman & Glover, 2010), but now the term "educational or academic leadership" is used to describe programs beyond schools including community colleges, proprietary colleges, community-based programs and universities (Con hance & Chance, 2002). In today's dynamic and challenging world, a newer demand is emerging for the academic leaders in higher education to meet the diverse challenges of a global economy (Shaw, 2013). Since corporate leaders already have the distinction of being international, the purpose of this research was to investigate differences in these leaderships and spell out qualities that might be used as a yardstick to propose changes for academic leaders.

### Effective leadership

Effective leadership provides the basis for development and

performance in organizations. It is evident that lack of strong leadership results in failure to strive for performance expectations. Mintzberg (2004) suggests effective leadership is about motivating other people for good decision making and for doing other tasks. In other words, an effective leader helps other people to release their positive energy that they possess naturally. Effective leadership focuses more on inspiration than empowerment; it is about developing bonds rather than controlling others; it is about demonstration of vision. All this is achieved by self-motivation and others' motivation.

There is wide spread debate about what is effective leadership (Watt & Willis, 2008) and usually the effectiveness of a leader is measured in terms of the leadership qualities s/he possesses and practices. So far as the qualities of an effective academic leader are concerned, there is a long list of qualities described by different researchers. Amongst the qualities which an academic leader might be expected to have is a 'quality of excellence', s/he is one who stands out from others, and should be a role model, people like to follow him/her, Buller (2008) said that an effective academic leader should be a team player, having a compelling vision, able to learn from the counter productive members, he should not rely on others for recognition and should lead by example. Marshall, Adams and Cameron (2001) said, to be effective, academic leaders need to have the trust of other staff and have faith in them. An effective leader is visionary and is not isolated from other staff. At the most senior levels of the University, an academic leader should be someone who could generate a sense of commitment to the intellectual life and vitality of the whole institution. He must be aware of environment to grab the opportunities in favor of institute. In Pakistan, Nisar (2011) interviewed a number of Pakistani educationists and concluded that effective academic leaders should

Table 1  
*Academic & Corporate Leaders Qualities*

<b>Characteristics of Academic Leader</b>	<b>Characteristics of Corporate Leader</b>
Being a resource provider, be an instructional resource, be good communicator, create a visible presence (Whitaker,1997)	Setting an agenda,
Research and evaluation skills	Building and Using the network, and
Offering ideas, providing feedback, replication of useful instruction, seeking opinions, providing opportunities for professional growth and support for collaboration, and praising effective teaching (Blase & Blase, 2000).	Having adequate political skills and erudition (Kotter, 1982)
Possessing Interpersonal or people skills	Building legislative support,
Planning keeping in view clear vision and goal identification (Scott, Coates and Anderson, 2008).	Negotiating and
Inducing commitment and enthusiasm in others (Brewer, 2001).	Identifying changing positions and interests (Lynn, 1987).
Sharing, facilitating, and guiding decisions (Dipaola, & Hoy, 2008).	Using different frames according to situation (Bolman & Deal, 1992).
Concentration on instructions; developing a community of learners; participatory decision making; nourishing the basics; flexible timing; ensuring ongoing professional development irrespective of position; and creating an environment of honesty, inquisition, and continuous progress” (Brewer, 2001).	Self-awareness, decisiveness, fairness, enthusiasm, integrity, knowledge, creativity and imagination and endurance (“Characteristics of a business leader”, 2016).

be: benefiting others, possess commitment and success, solid knowledge, motivation and enthusiasm, training based on experience and wisdom, hard work and sacrifice, sound interpersonal and communication skills.

How leadership in academia compares to corporate leadership?

Marshall, Adams and Cameron (2001) are of the opinion that academic institutes lack hierarchical structure as compared to corporate sector and interestingly sometimes academic leader are not expected to lead; we cannot expect that in corporate sector. Secondly, leaders in corporate sector tend to be noisier as compared to academic institutes. In academia, leaders are less competitive because there is less at stake in the sense that if something is done wrong in academia it will not result in demise of the organization, but in the corporate sector it could lead to disaster. Following table describes the most frequently described qualities of effective academic and corporate leaders:

We, in this study, aimed to find out what students, teachers and people in corporate sectors think about who is an effective leader? It is important to study leader qualities in Pakistan because it exerts influence on followers and institutions (Abdullah, 2011), second, some experts suggest effective academic leadership in Pakistan is weak (Memon, 2007; Tufail, 2011; Rehman, 2011), third, benchmark standards to judge effective and role model leaders is deficient (Rehman, 2011), and finally previous studies have looked at other areas of leadership that are ancillary to our study, including leadership styles (Nawaz & Bodla, 2010), leaders’ personality characteristics (Shujaat, Zehra & Anila, 1992), perception of effective leaders in organizations (Rizvi & Amjad, 2001) etc. The main objective of this study is to explore perceived qualities of an effective academic leader and compare it with a corporate leader. In this context two research questions arise; First, how do people in academia and corporate sector perceive an effective leader? Two, what are the similarities and differences in type (characteristics, qualities and dispositions) of these leaders?

## Method

### *Sample*

A purposive sample of 100 (MPhil and Masters Level) students, 50 teachers and 50 employees of corporate organizations (Middle and Lower Levels), with an equal ratio of men and women were selected. Age range of subjects was 21-50 years. The sample of students and teachers was taken from three randomly selected (two public and one private) universities of Lahore; whereas the sample of corporate sector employees was taken from different national and multi-national business organizations based on availability of employees.

### *Instrument*

We gave blank pieces of paper and pencils to the participants and simply asked to list down 10 qualities they thought essential to an academic or corporate leader. They were also asked to rank these qualities.

### *Procedure*

From the list of all university names we randomly selected three universities. After taking permission from concerned authorities and informed consent from participants, we purposively selected university teachers and students. The participants were contacted personally and those willing to participate in study were selected. Before recruiting the student sample, they were asked if they want to pursue careers in academia or industry in future. Only those students were included in the sample who wanted to join either academia or corporate sector. Those who were to join the academic were asked to describe the characteristics of effective academic leader whereas students who want to be a part of corporate sector

were asked to describe the qualities of effective corporate leader. Corporate sector employees were also contacted personally and were recruited on the basis of their availability. The purpose of selecting this portion of the sample was to assess leader qualities as perceived by those who worked in the academic and corporate sector (employees) and those who do not have direct exposure of work (like students).

The participants were provided with paper and pencil and were asked to list down ten qualities of either the academic leader or corporate leader which they think are essential in the leaders of their respective fields. Once they have done with it, they were asked to rank order these qualities according to preference. The participants were asked to assign number 1 to most important quality and number 10 to least important. It helped determine the successive importance of the qualities. A pool of 2000 qualities was gathered and we consider only those qualities for further analysis which yielded minimum 10 frequency. This data was then used to prepare a cognitive map of leadership.

#### Analysis

Frequency was counted to find out the most frequently occurring leader qualities and these were then statistically analyzed with cluster analysis and multidimensional scaling (MDS) which helped maintain the cognitive schema of leadership (Khawaja & Ajmal, 2012). Data related to academic leader characteristics and corporate leader characteristics was handled separately and then the comparison was made.

Cluster analysis and MDS are unconventional statistical techniques that were used to obtain the visual illustration of the qualities of a leader in the minds of students, teachers and corporate employees. Cluster analysis represented a computer generated model called dendrogram which helped identify a simple structure in a complex mass of data. In cluster analysis objects are categorized in groups (Kaufmann & Rousseau, 1990) and numbers of observations are reduced by clustering them into groups. We used hierarchical cluster analysis in our study which is applicable to small data sets (Tan, Steinbach & Kumar, 2005). We also used 'nearest neighbor method' to split dendrogram into meaningful clusters (Norušis, 2009). MDS rendered spatial representation of similarities and distances between a set of objects (Borgatti, 1997). We used 'ordinal non-metrical MDS' for this study which treats distance as subjective similarity ratings (Norusis, 1997). MDS model fit can be obtained by judging two values: Stress and R-

square (RSQ). Stress is a measure of correlation between squared distances and disparities (Davison, 1992) and RSQ is squared correlation between raw data and the distances (Norusis, 1997). Small values of stress suggest a good fit of the data while R-square should be nearer to 1 for good relationship (magnitude 0-1, 0 as least). As we were dealing with a data without any priori hypothesis and research was in exploratory phase so it was appropriate to use cluster analysis and MDS for this data.

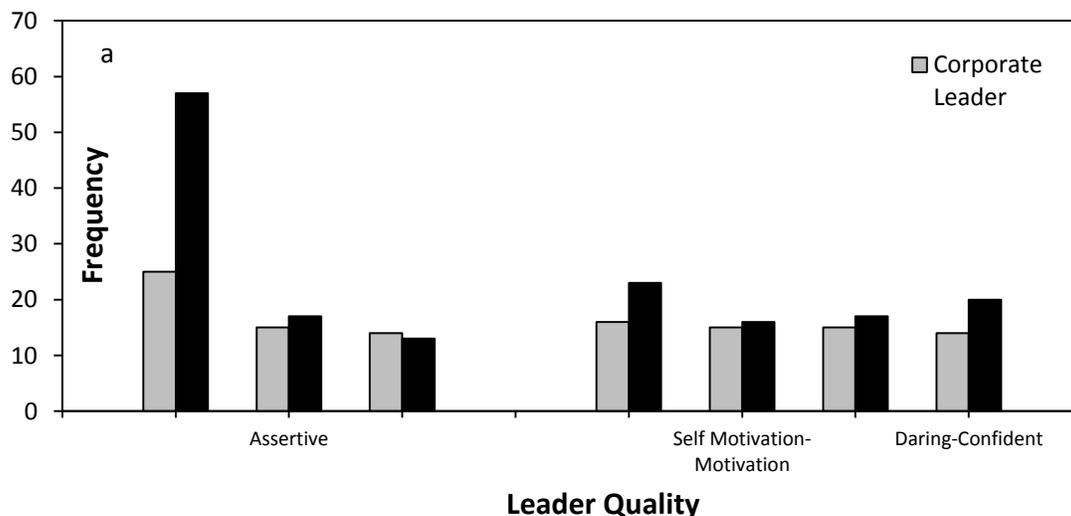
#### Results

First, descriptions made by participants were categorized into variables (qualities) and then frequency count was done for them, see Table 2.

Table 2  
*Most Frequently Occurring Qualities of Academic (n = 100) and Corporate Leader (n = 100)*

Characteristics of Academic leader	Frequency	Characteristics of Corporate leader	Frequency
Communication	58	Communication	26
Intellectual Abilities	25	Integrity	18
Honesty	24	Vision	18
Cooperative	22	Passion	16
Confident	22	Self-motivated	16
Knowledgeable	20	Sense of humor	16
Flexible	19	Daring	15
Humble	18	Assertive	15
Assertive	18	Humility	15
Understanding	17	Creative	14
Respect	17	Discipline	13
Creative	16		
Motivation	16		

Table 2 represents 13 top characteristics/qualities related to academia leaders and 11 to leaders in the corporate sector. We retained only those qualities which yielded a frequency of at least  $n=10$ . 13 qualities in academic leadership and 11 in corporate leadership meet the criterion. The similarities and differences in academic and corporate leader qualities are graphically summarized below (see Figure 1).



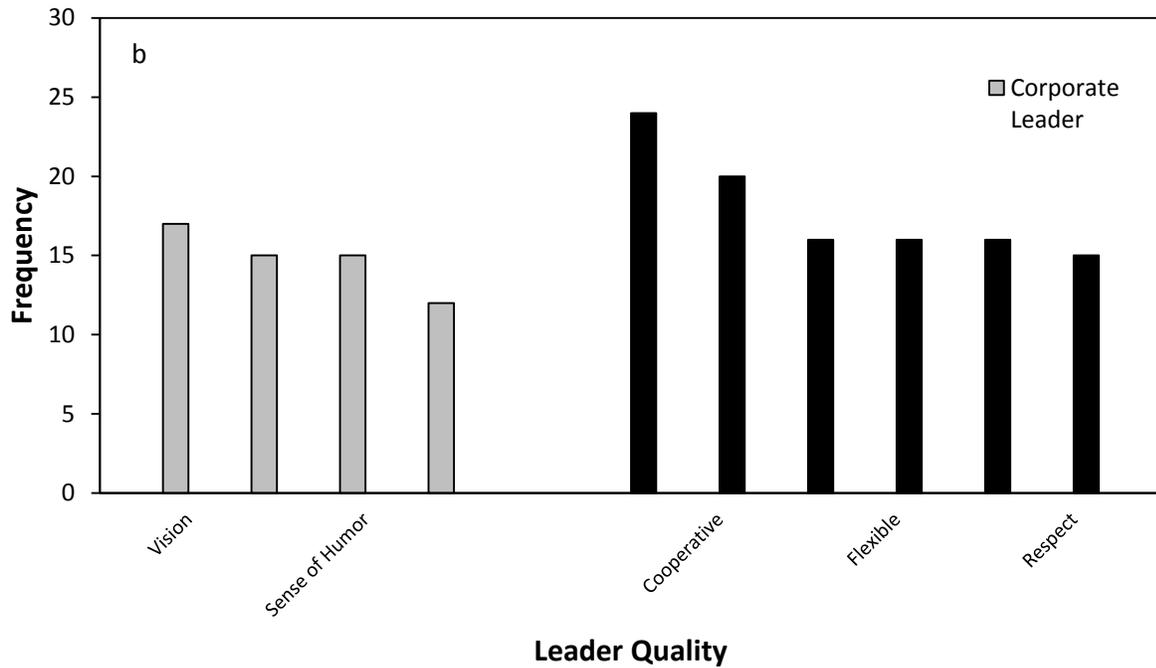


Figure 1. The top panel of the figure (a) shows seven qualities of academic and corporate leaders that were perceived as similar by participants. The bottom panel (b) shows those qualities that were different across these leaderships.

Attribute of communication was highest ranking with most votes for both leaderships, however number of these votes for this quality were more than twice for academic than corporate leader. It is because communication skills is and should be the stronger quality of an academic leader than a corporate leader. Other six qualities were close contenders for both leaderships and included creative, assertive, integrity, honesty, humble & humility, daring & confident, and motivated & self-motivated.

Panel b of Figure 1 shows differences in academic and corporate leader qualities. Academic leader qualities included intellectual ability, cooperative, knowledge, flexible, understanding and respect; whereas corporate leader qualities included vision, passion, sense of humor, and discipline. The qualities were comparable in frequency; expect intellectual ability which was the highest among all ten.

Many qualities of effective academic leader resemble Drew (2006) who emphasized the importance of flexibility, creativity and change; Middlehurst (1993 & 2004) who focused excellent communication ability, confidence in self and staff and Vilkinas and Cartan (2005), who pointed out that an academic leader should be motivating and creative. Whereas qualities of effective corporate leader resemble Hofstede’s (1980) important leader qualities which are integrity, honesty, humility, courage, commitment, sincerity, passion, confidence, positivity, wisdom, determination, compassion and sensitivity.

Figure 2 represents the result of cluster analysis, a dendrogram containing hierarchical grouping of responses with varying levels of homogeneity. By splitting the dendrogram at a particular point we got two main clusters of qualities for academic leaders and three main clusters of corporate leader qualities. We used ‘Nearest neighbor method’ technique to form clusters (Norusis, 2009).

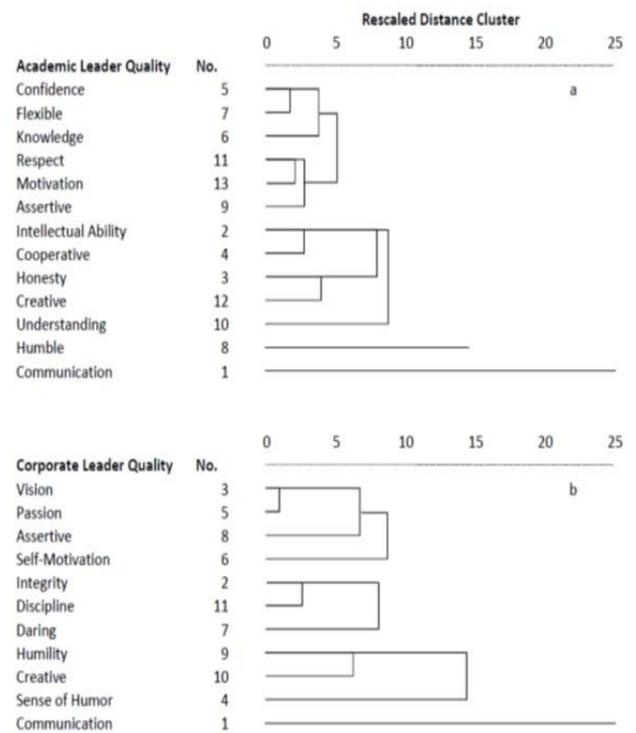


Figure 2. Dendrogram split in two (panel a) and three (panel b) clusters. The first cluster (Figure 2a) comprises two parts. First part includes confident, flexible and knowledgeable. These characteristics are remotely related (based on the location of both set of qualities) to respect, motivation and assertive. The second cluster includes intellectual abilities, cooperative, honesty, creativity and understanding. Two qualities communication skills

and humble did not fit in any cluster. On the whole the clusters depict different complementing aspects of a leader's personality for example flexible, knowledgeable and confident together depict that knowledge gives a person confidence yet the person should be flexible because his knowledge is not ultimate. Call (2008) discovered a positive relationship between knowledge and confidence. On the other hand respect and motivation are closely related and have a link with assertiveness; and intellect and creativity are also related concepts as Sugarman (2001) proposes successful leaders are intrinsically motivated along with being confident, assertive and having mutual respect.

Further, cluster analysis on corporate leader qualities (Figure 2b) revealed three small clusters. The first cluster comprised of vision, passion, assertive and self-motivated. The second cluster which was remotely connected to the first cluster comprised of integrity, discipline and daring. Cluster 3 comprised humility, creative and

sense of humor but communication did not fit into any cluster. This division seems quite logical because a visionary leader must be passionate, assertive and self-motivated because he/she has to make others follow his/her vision which is not possible without being passionate and assertive. Secondly a daring leader can ensure integrity and discipline. Some of these qualities are in line with previous research. For example Ünal (2014) indicates that self-enhancing humor positively correlates with affective wellbeing of employees. Whitaker (1995) described communication skills as important quality of leaders whereas Tracy (2012) considered vision, integrity, humility and courage as important attributes of a corporate leader.

Schema of academic and corporate leaderships were presented with MDS, resulting perceptual maps show the relative positioning of all objects (Wilkinson, 1976).

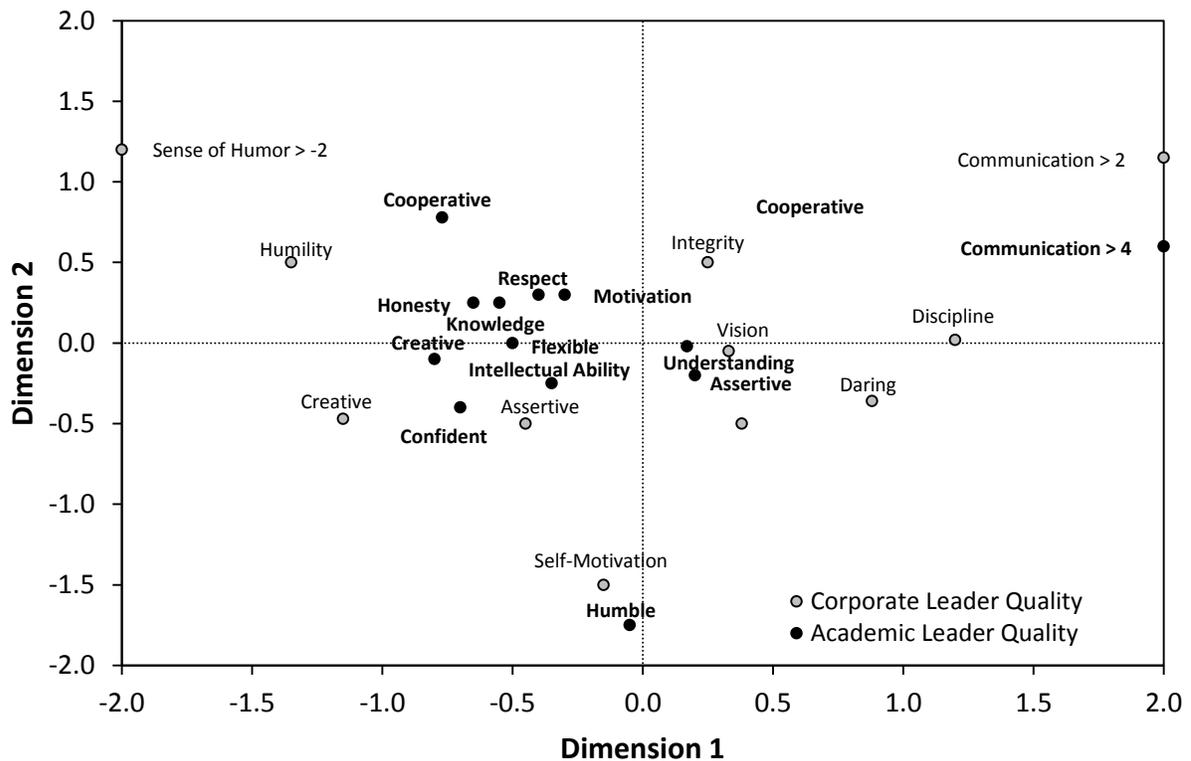


Figure 3. Two-dimensional map representing the schematic structure of qualities of academic and corporate leaders

For two dimensional MDS of academic qualities stress value was .18 whereas the RSQ remained .92. Both of these values are significant and suggest that the two dimensional model fit the respective data set (Kruskal, 1964). The MDS revealed that most of the qualities clustered together whereas communication and humble stay far away from rest of the qualities in MDS of an academic leader. Dimension 1 on x-axis comprised of creative, assertive, passion, daring and self-motivating for corporate leader. It reflects a daring leader, who is passionate and have valor to survive in cut throat competition which we usually observe in corporate sector and for academic leader it reflects qualities like intellectual ability, confidence, assertiveness etc. which can be named as 'hard skills' whereas hard skills are technical skills that are specific skills

required in a given context so the qualities on Dimension 1 are specific qualities needed to get the job (of an academic and corporate leader) done. But Dimension 2 revealed a bit softer image of corporate leader who possess sense of humor and is humble but is not unaware of his vision. Dimension 2 can be labeled as 'Soft Skills' Giusti (2008) referred this term to be associated with a cluster of personality traits that characterize one's relationships with other people; communication skills, cooperation, sense of humor, humility etc. all indicate that leaders are expected to possess soft skills. The above figure further reinforces the graphical representation of qualities and most of the qualities in both leadership types clustered together. It further indicated that different positioning of qualities (for example motivation lies at upper half of the MDS and self-motivating at lower half etc.) reflects a quantitative difference rather qualitative difference.

## Discussion

Thus the comparison of academic and corporate leaders in perception of students and followers indicate some similarities and differences. Our findings support Leske (2013) who suggest that corporate leaders and leaders in higher education have similarities and differences. He attributed the differences as a result difference in culture of academia and industry. So in our study communication skills, creativity, assertiveness and humbleness/humility, motivation/self -motivated, integrity/honesty and humble/humility remained similar. So far as differences are concerned people want an intellectual academic leader predominantly possessing soft skills whereas a corporate leader is perceived as ruthless, daring and visionary.

So far as comparison of current qualities with existing literature is concerned communication skills (Jamshed, 2010; Rizvi & Amjad, 2008), assertiveness and humility (Nisar, 2012; Sugarman, 2001), confidence (Park, 2013), flexibility (Drew, 2006) and motivation (Vilkinas & Cartan, 2005) were found similar whereas respect, understanding, cooperative behavior were described by our participants only and have no traces in literature.

It was interesting to note that in our study 'Transparency and Accountability' were not described as important leader quality in both sectors though they are considered as central pillars of good governance (Halle & Wolfe, 2010). Moreover none of our participants described succession planning as attribute of leaders which is considered a crucial element for sustainable development of policies and continued growth of organizations (Howard, 2014).

## Conclusion

This research indicates that perception of followers in both organizations reveals similarities in qualities their leaders (though some differences are also there). These similarities and differences are not just limited to leader attributes but include reflections of followers relation can be built for leading effectively. It is important for leaders to be aware of what their followers expect from them because it will serve the basis for their being effective leader and their followers will be more satisfied (Strauss, 1977); which enhances productivity, organizational growth and job satisfaction (Aziri, 2008; Bushra, Usman & Naveed, 2011; Hanaysha, et al., 2012). In the light of above findings we can conclude that leadership is a global phenomenon though it has influence of culture and context as well. The global aspect is apparent from similar qualities of academic and corporate leaders in our study and differences are context based.

## Limitations and Implications

The study highlights the importance of importance of context in specifying leader qualities; replication of this study to other leadership types would validate our results. One limitation of this study we think is based on the sample-type, which consisted of outsiders (students and employees) as they perceived leaders; perception of leaders themselves was not taken into account. Future research can be directed towards including the perspective of academic and corporate leaders about their own leader qualities and about each other's leader qualities as well and comparison and contrast of leaders' and followers' opinion would be interesting. The study pioneers a map of leader qualities in academia and corporations, and provides policy makers in structuring institutional

human resource by selecting leaders or training them to become more global, especially academic leaders. In addition, it is important for leaders to have insights about their qualities and expectations that should bridge the gap between them and subordinates to positively affect job satisfaction (Aziri, 2011), well-being (Ilardi, Leone, Kansser & Ryan, 1983) and performance (Porac, Ferris, & Fedor, 1983) in their employees.

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