# Editorial: Future of educational management and leadership: leading the way

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The world is currently going through an unprecedented moment in history with the pandemic, war, recession and many similar other explicit and tacit realities. While at the same time, we also witness some of the positive developments such as the introduction of the international financial facility for education and others. All sectors including education are impacted by such emergencies; and managing education under such circumstances is obviously a challenging task. It is therefore crucial for educators, policy makers, researchers and all relevant stakeholders to reflect on the future of educational management and leadership.

However, reflecting on and interest in researching to understand what managers and leaders do and how they could manage or lead effectively in challenging times to meet the changing and complex demands of the times are not new. Nonetheless, the complexity and magnitude of the changes emerging in recent times underpin the urgency of rethinking and rereading educational management and leadership. Hannon and Mackay (2021, 2) describe the state as 'an era of existential threat through climate crisis; the perils of pandemics; violent conflict; declining democracy; and widening divides'. As a response to this, a number of perspectives have been offered by different writers to deal with the threat (Mitchell et al, 2022; Schechter, et al, 2022; McLeod and Dulsky, 2021). One example of such perspectives is the idea of the 'Five Signposts' put forward by Connolly et al (2021). The first signpost argues for the creation of new narratives that are explicit and accurately reflect the new realities. Such narratives go beyond individual educational institutions to the public realm and require informed and

thriving school leaders who can consciously depart from the status quo and existing dysfunctional narratives. The second signpost stresses on the notion of leading within ecosystems – educational institutions should open up to other organisations and sectors to meet the increasing diversified and personalised educational needs of the public. 'Lead with equity' is the third signpost; the authors conceptualise 'equity' beyond the current general use and application to a more critical perspective. The authors critique the current 'over-valuing of cognitive capacity' over and above the range of human cognitive abilities. They argue for school leaders to use an equity lens that covers all the different domains of the school life. The fourth signpost is 'lead for innovation'. This argues for fresh perspectives of innovation beyond improvement and maintenance to 'fundamental innovation' that can effectively deal with new challenges in society that the existing systems are incapable of dealing with. The last (fifth) signpost is 'lead for futures literacy'. Future literacy is generally viewed as a skill that allows people to better understand the influence of the future in terms of what they see and do which invariably informs their preparation for and dealing with changes as they occur (UNESCO, 2020). The authors argue that it is a duty on educational leaders to develop futures literacy in order to have an 'informed and balance' navigation through the future. The five signposts view of how educational leaders and managers could effectively deal with the existential threat is broad and focuses on key stakes across a wide spectrum, yet presents a powerful insight into how different concepts and models from different disciplines could be drawn to inform educational leadership and management.

Much of the discussions on the futures of educational management and leadership approaches and strategies in the context of the current myriad challenges are generally concentrated directly or indirectly on areas related to contextual dynamics – propositions that call for the adoption of management/leadership lens that is more globally oriented rather than locally

focus; focusing more on the challenges of the global context rather than the local. It is generally agreed that context is an important variable in school management and leadership due to the fact that leadership/management approaches are often complexly linked to the context (Brauckmann et al, 2020; Ramakrishnan & Abukari, 2020). As the local is implicated in the global and the global implicated in the local, it is essential to recognise the complexity involved in the relationship between the two (Abukari & David, 2021). Whilst we acknowledge that there are some issues that are global in nature and confront or affect all educational institutions globally, there are cases in which globalised oriented approaches to deal with such issues clash with local values and ethics. In such instances, sticking religiously to these global approaches, often sprung from the dominant perspectives, have the potential to run counterproductive. Hence, we propose a critical balance between the local and the global. Educational management and leadership actions should not simply adopt global oriented perspectives or stick to the status quo that show limited evidence or indication of their effectiveness in dealing with local educational issues in a globalised context. The critical balance approach requires school leaders to develop informed understanding of the issues both from the local and global perspectives, identify and assess the available resources; and determine the best approach to deal with the issue. This approach would involve an adaptive process (Heifetz et al, 2009).

This special issue is a collection of selected papers from the conference on the future of educational management and leadership, hosted by the British University in Dubai on 28 May 2022. The papers in this issue largely explore the role of educational leaders in managing emerging challenges in education. One of the papers examined the ways to manage pedagogical efficiency using TPACK framework in digital learning and highlights the importance of technology integration into pedagogical practices. Another explored the preparation of teachers with the 21st century competence and offers relevant recommendations to empower teachers

for the future of education. An investigation into the impact of COVID on school leadership is the focus of another paper. The paper identifies a number of solutions each school leader found to overcome those challenges of the pandemic. And another study recommended investment perspective approach toward sustainable performance of leaders. These and other relevant reflections would continue to help us manage the complex uncertain and ever changing future of education.

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