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AN INVESTIGATION OF WHAT IMPACT BEING A STUDENT TEACHING ASSISTANT HAVE ON HIGHLY QUALIFIED STUDENTS

Extended abstract

Introduction

Universities are faced by constantly challenges regarding their approach to educating students. The Danish government puts a pressure on the Danish universities to have a higher focus on being elite universities. This forces the universities to retain the highly qualified students in academia. In combination with this challenge, AU is faced with lower and restricted financial support and an

increasing cost and quantity of students (Agerdal-Hjermind, Clausen, Schlichter, & Johansen, 2011). Researchers have suggested using student teaching assistants (STA) as an approach to handle efficient teaching of students with the limited resources (Agerdal-Hjermind, Clausen, Schlichter, & Johansen, 2011).

The course Business Development with Information Systems (BDiS) is using this approach. The course is a mandatory five ECTS course, and is taking place at third semester for BSc students. Highly qualified students are carefully chosen, and given the opportunity to become STA's.

AU uses this approach to support the challenges mentioned before. One of the aims is to qualify highly qualified students to become elite students, while at the same time reducing costs, benefitting both the use of financial means and student competences.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to investigate whether giving highly qualified students the opportunity to become STA's also improves the students, making them elite students, and making sure that AU can compete with elite universities in a global manner. The article focusses on the use of STA's and the individual gain in further studies after being given the opportunity of being a STA. It seeks to investigate how being a STA effects the highly qualified students approach toward their own studying (Sixhøi, Borgstrøm, & Schlichter, 2017).

Methodology

This paper uses a qualitative research design with grounded theory techniques, by applying open coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The purpose is to understand how being a STA effects the study activity and attitude towards studying. The data is collected from a case study, containing semi-structured micro interviews. The informants were a first time STA, a second time STA and an associate professor. Common to the informants was that they had all been involved in the course BDiS at AU in the autumn semester 2017, and they have all participated in the weekly scheduled meetings.

The STA's were asked to reflect upon their accession towards study activity and attitude towards studying. They were told to compare their study activity and attitude from before they became STA's and now, to understand the setting. Meanwhile the professor was asked to reflect upon implications, positive and negative, of using STA's and whether the professor experienced any difference in the highly qualified students after taking on the role of being a STA (Sixhøi, Borgstrøm, & Schlichter, 2017).

The micro interviews were done in February 2017, just after the course and the exams for the course had ended. The interviews took the offset in the following questions:

STA's

1. What is your approach towards your studies now and what was is before becoming a STA?

2. Are you aware of any changes in your approach to being your studies after becoming a STA?

Professor

1. Which implications does AU have from the use of STA's?
2. What is your perception of the STA's as students after becoming STA's?

The respondents answered the questions in writing. It was determined that the questions answered in writing are sufficient for this type of research area, because it isn't a sensitive or personal area (Sixhøi, Borgstrøm, & Schlichter, 2017).

Key findings

The tree micro interviews revealed 6 different codes that contributed to answering the research question (Sixhøi, Borgstrøm, & Schlichter, 2017). The codes that were found were: A) Impact from co-workers and professors (network), B) Change in study activity, C) Change in study activity, D) Change in study activity, E) Improvement of performance and F) AU's benefits from using STA's.

The interviews of the two STA's showed that there was a change in the students approach to their studies after being STA's. The students study activity increased in relation to time and quality and their attitude changed in a positive manner. After being STA's the students increased their motivation and acknowledge of the importance of learning styles. The students also experienced an improvement of their skills and increased performance. The students described that taking part in the team of other STA's and professors and the opportunity to see a course at the university from «the other side» as some of the reasons for the change in approach (Sixhøi, Borgstrøm, & Schlichter, 2017).

The interview of the professor backed up the former findings and described the use of STA's as beneficial to the university by reducing workload in some aspects and beneficial to the students of the course BDiS by giving them the opportunity to ask for help without being effected by the authority towards the professors (Sixhøi, Borgstrøm, & Schlichter, 2017).

Further studies and limitations

During the empirical collection, it came to our attention, that there could be other aspects of the subject, which could contribute to the overall research of the area.

The paper had an overall focus on being a STA from the beginning of the research. Furthermore, it could be interesting to investigate whether there could be other alternative ways making highly qualified student's elite students. The further studies should show consideration for the controlled resources giving to each course on the university.

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GLOBAL LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

As global corporate citizens, companies worldwide strive to fulfill their organizational and societal missions. They select leaders who articulate a vision that can guide them toward achieving long-term economic viability and social well-being. They expect their leaders to motivate and inspire employees in consistent and effective ways. Leaders continually create options and make decisions that influence the success of entire company.

Leadership by definition is an interpersonal influence directed toward the achievement of a goal or goals. Leadership can be also viewed as a dynamic process in a group or a team, where one individual influences the others to contribute voluntarily to the achievement of group tasks in a given situation. Thus taking into account all the definitions above one may still wonder what leadership is. Are leaders born or made? Can anyone be a leader or only the favored few? Is it necessary to be popular to be an effective leader?

It has been proved that a leader can be a manager, but a manager is not necessarily a leader. The basic aim of leaders is to succeed in completing the task set with the help of their group. An effective leader will need to inspire confidence and trust. Successful leadership depends not only on the knowledge, skills and personality of the leader, but also on the most important leadership competencies which is known as emotional intelligence. Employees benefit most from leaders who show positive emotion and enthusiasm. Leaders need more than the basic traits of intelligence and job-relevant knowledge. It is the possessions of the five components of emotional intelligence – self-awareness, self-regulation or self-management, empathy, motivation, and social skills – that allow the individual to become a star performer.

Self-awareness is the ability to recognize and understand the moods and emotions and helps the leaders to exhibit self-confidence and self-assessment. The second competency is self-regulation which means the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods and helps to think before acting. Such leaders represent trustworthiness, integrity, comfort and openness to change. Empathy means the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people which helps the leaders to demonstrate the ability to build and retain talent in their organization. Motivation is reflected in the passion to work and inspires the leaders to achieve. The last emotional-intelligence competency is social skill which is the proficiency in