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At the outset, I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all the Editorial Board Members, Editors, Peer Review Members, contributors, and readers for making *Cyber Times International Journal of Technology & Management* an outstanding success. Their unwavering support, dedication, and commitment to academic excellence have significantly contributed to the growth and reputation of the journal.

We are pleased to present **Volume 19 – Issue 2** of *Cyber Times International Journal of Technology & Management*. This issue features a collection of high-quality research papers and scholarly articles that reflect contemporary developments, innovative ideas, and critical insights across emerging areas of Technology, Management, Law, Education, and other multidisciplinary domains. The diversity of topics covered in this issue highlights the increasing importance of interdisciplinary research in addressing global challenges and opportunities.

The overwhelming response received from researchers, authors, academicians, law-enforcement agencies, and industry professionals for submitting their research papers and articles is deeply appreciated and duly acknowledged across the globe. Their valuable contributions have enriched the journal's content and strengthened its role as a platform for disseminating knowledge, fostering innovation, and encouraging scholarly dialogue among academia, industry, and society.

On behalf of the Editorial Team, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all authors for their valuable research contributions and to our reviewers for their constructive evaluations that help maintain the highest standards of publication quality. We hope that the research published in this issue will inspire further inquiry, collaboration, and advancement in various fields of study, while continuing to serve as a meaningful resource for our readers worldwide.

We look forward to receive your valuable and future contributions to make this journal a joint endeavor.

With Warm Regards,



Dr. ANUP GIRDHAR

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From Teaching Faculty to Thought Leaders: Transforming Roles in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The role of teaching faculty in higher education is experiencing a major transformation in response to changing academic, technological, and social demands. Earlier, faculty members were primarily seen as providers of classroom instruction whose main responsibility was to deliver lectures, assess students, and complete curriculum requirements. While teaching remains a central function, the expectations from educators have expanded considerably. Today, faculty members are increasingly encouraged to become thought leaders who contribute beyond the classroom by shaping ideas, influencing policy, driving innovation, and addressing real-world challenges.

This paper examines the evolving journey from traditional teaching faculty to influential thought leaders in higher education. It highlights the key factors driving this shift, including globalization, rapid technological advancement, industry-academia collaboration, research competitiveness, and the growing need for socially relevant knowledge. In the modern knowledge economy, institutions seek faculty members who can generate new ideas, lead meaningful research, mentor future leaders, and build connections with communities, industries, and policymakers.

To succeed as thought leaders, faculty members need a broad set of competencies. These include subject expertise, strong communication skills, research capability, digital literacy, creativity, leadership qualities, and the ability to collaborate across disciplines. They must also be adaptable and willing to engage with emerging trends and societal issues.

However, this transition is not without challenges. Heavy teaching workloads, limited research funding, administrative responsibilities, and lack of institutional support often hinder faculty growth. Resistance to change and insufficient professional development opportunities can also slow progress.

Therefore, higher education institutions must adopt effective strategies such as mentoring systems, research incentives, leadership training, and collaborative platforms. Thought leadership in academia is increasingly essential because it enables educators to create impact, inspire innovation, and contribute meaningfully to national and global development.

KEYWORDS: *Teaching Faculty, Thought Leadership, Higher Education, Academic Leadership, Innovation, Faculty Development*

1. Introduction

Higher education systems worldwide are evolving rapidly due to globalization, technological advancement, and the demands of the knowledge economy. Faculty roles are

no longer limited to teaching and assessment but are expanding toward leadership in research, innovation, and public discourse.

Thought leaders are individuals recognized as authorities in their domain who influence

ideas, practices, and policies. In the education sector, they contribute not only to knowledge dissemination but also to knowledge creation and societal transformation.

Literature Review

The evolving role of teaching faculty from traditional instructors to thought leaders closely corresponds with the leadership demands identified in the context of Industry 4.0. As higher education institutions adapt to technological disruption and innovation-driven environments, faculty members must develop critical thinking, strategic vision, interpersonal competence, and adaptability—qualities essential for guiding students and institutions through change. These expectations are consistent with the leadership traits and skill categories highlighted by Bapat (2023), emphasizing that modern educators must function not only as knowledge providers but also as transformative leaders in the knowledge economy.

The transformation of teaching faculty into thought leaders in higher education strongly parallels the changing nature of leadership and management in the digital age. As Deshpande and Beharay (2025) emphasize the importance of digital literacy, agile leadership, emotional intelligence, collaboration, and continuous learning in modern organizations, similar competencies are increasingly essential for faculty members who are expected to lead innovation, mentor students, engage in interdisciplinary research, and adapt to technology-driven academic environments. Thus, the shift from teaching faculty to thought leaders reflects a broader movement in which educators, like corporate leaders, must evolve from traditional authority-based roles to dynamic, human-centric, and future-ready leadership models.

The transition from teaching faculty to thought leaders in higher education is closely

connected to the growing importance of transformational leadership within academic institutions. As Thakkar and Harchekar (2025) highlight, academic leaders carry responsibilities that extend beyond organizational success to broader societal development, requiring them to address challenges such as limited resources, resistance to change, and the need to balance tradition with innovation. Similarly, faculty members evolving into thought leaders must adopt transformative leadership approaches that inspire change, foster institutional resilience, and prepare higher education systems to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Teaching Faculty

Teaching faculty traditionally focus on:

- Delivering curriculum
- Evaluating student performance
- Maintaining academic standards

However, traditional teaching methods often fail to fully engage students or foster critical thinking in modern educational environments.

2.2 Thought Leadership in Education

Thought leadership refers to:

- Generating innovative ideas
- Influencing academic and public discourse
- Solving real-world problems through research

Faculty as thought leaders engage in interdisciplinary collaboration, research, and policy influence, extending their impact beyond classrooms.

3. Evolution from Faculty to Thought Leaders

3.1 Drivers of Transformation

Several factors are accelerating this shift:

a) Knowledge Economy

Modern economies demand innovation and continuous knowledge creation.

b) Technological Advancement

Digital tools, AI, and online learning platforms require faculty to innovate teaching practices.

c) Globalization

Academic collaboration across borders encourages broader intellectual influence.

d) Institutional Expectations

Universities now emphasize research output, global rankings, and societal impact.

3.2 Changing Roles of Faculty

Faculty roles are expanding into:

- Researchers and innovators
- Policy advisors
- Mentors and leaders
- Industry collaborators

Faculty leadership is increasingly viewed as distributed rather than hierarchical, involving influence rather than authority.

4. Competencies Required for Thought Leadership

4.1 Research Excellence

Publishing impactful research and contributing to global knowledge.

4.2 Innovation in Teaching

Using active learning, technology, and inclusive practices to enhance student outcomes.

4.3 Communication Skills

Ability to articulate ideas through:

- Publications
- Conferences
- Media engagement

4.4 Leadership and Influence

Thought leaders inspire change through vision and collaboration rather than authority.

4.5 Reflective Practice

Continuous self-evaluation improves leadership and teaching effectiveness.

Role of Faculty Development Programs

Faculty development programs play a crucial role in this transition by:

- Enhancing pedagogical skills
- Promoting leadership training
- Encouraging collaborative learning

The “learner-leader” model supports faculty in becoming both educators and leaders simultaneously.

5. Challenges in Transition

5.1 Resistance to Change

Faculty accustomed to traditional roles may resist new expectations.

5.2 Lack of Training

Leadership development is often not formally included in academic training.

5.3 Workload Pressure

Balancing teaching, research, and leadership responsibilities is challenging.

5.4 Institutional Barriers

Recognition systems often prioritize research output over teaching leadership.

6. Strategies for Developing Thought Leaders

6.1 Encouraging Research and Innovation

Institutions should provide:

- Funding opportunities
- Research collaborations
- Publication support

6.2 Leadership Training

Structured programs focusing on:

- Decision-making

- Strategic thinking
- Team leadership

6.3 Industry and Policy Engagement

Faculty should engage with:

- Government bodies
- Industry partners
- Think tanks

6.4 Collaborative Learning Communities

Peer learning enhances innovation and leadership skills.

6.5 Use of Technology

Adopting digital tools and platforms to expand reach and influence.

7. Impact of Thought Leadership in Education

Thought leaders in academia:

- Shape educational policies
- Influence societal development
- Drive innovation and research
- Improve student learning outcomes

They contribute to both academic excellence and real-world problem-solving.

8. Conclusion

The transition from teaching faculty to thought leaders represents a paradigm shift in higher education. Faculty are no longer mere transmitters of knowledge but creators, innovators, and influencers. Institutions must support this transformation through policy reforms, faculty development programs, and recognition systems. Developing thought leaders in academia is essential for addressing global challenges and advancing knowledge societies.

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