Analysing Leadership Perception: The Role of Demographic and Professional Factors

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ABSTRACT

The study results indicate that demographic and professional factors do not significantly impact the perception of leadership styles among respondents. This research suggest that Age does not significantly influence perceptions of democratic leadership. However, younger employees may feel more encouraged by supervisors, suggesting a potential area for further research. The research also found that differences in education levels do not lead to significant variations in how respondents perceive democratic leadership. While minor variations exist (e.g., PhD holders feel more encouraged, bachelor's holders feel they contribute more to decisions), they are not statistically meaningful. Respondents from UG and PG institutions do not differ significantly in their perception of autocratic leadership behaviours. As a result, institutions do not need to modify leadership strategies based on UG vs. PG levels.

Keywords: Democratic, Autocratic, Leadership, Professional Perception.

INTRODUCTION

For education institute various leadership styles are used for various level of courses offered. The present research is to identify which leadership styles are used by different education institutions.

Transformational Leadership: Transformational leadership is one of the most admired and effective leadership styles in modern organizations. Leaders in this category inspire and motivate their teams to achieve high levels of performance and exceed expectations. They focus on individual and team development, fostering a sense of purpose and commitment.

Servant Leadership: Servant leadership revolves around the idea that a leader's primary responsibility is to serve their team members. This approach prioritizes the needs of employees and encourages a sense of community and collaboration. Leaders who practice servant leadership are often seen as supportive mentors rather than authoritarian figures.

Adaptive Leadership: In a rapidly changing educational landscape, adaptive leadership is indispensable. This style focuses on the leader's ability to adapt to evolving circumstances, make quick decisions, and lead the organization through uncertainty. Adaptive leaders are resilient, innovative, and capable of guiding their teams through challenges.

Collaborative Leadership: Collaborative leadership emphasizes teamwork, cooperation, and collective decision-making. Leaders who adopt this style prioritize building strong relationships within the organization, promoting open communication, and seeking input from all stakeholders.

Authentic Leadership: Authentic leaders are genuine, transparent, and true to their values. They inspire trust and credibility through their honesty and consistency. This style is particularly important in building strong organizational cultures based on integrity and ethics.

Situational Leadership: Situational leadership recognizes that different situations require different leadership approaches. Leaders must adapt their style to suit the needs of the moment, whether that involves being more directive, coaching, supporting, or delegating.

Leadership is crucial for effective functioning of any organization. The fundamental of leadership is its

persuading power on human resources, organizations' source of competitive advantage, and the resultant outcomes. In swaying followers and harnessing organization member's selves to their work roles, leaders must enhance employees' motivation as having engaged employees is critical for organization to achieve its goal (Batista-Taran et al., 2009). Studies, (e.g., Bakker and Bal, 2010; Harter et al., 2002; Gatchopoulos et al., 2009) recorded the noteworthiness of employees' work engagement for organizational achievement measured in terms of monetary returns, productivity, client satisfaction, and a number of individual-level alluring employees' characteristics such as taking initiative and being proactive.

Literature (e.g. Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Kim, 2014; Park et al., 2013; Saks, 2006; Sala nova et al., 2011; Sala nova and Schaufeli, 2008; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Song et al., 2012; Gatchopoulos et al., 2007) studied employee engagement within the framework of its antecedents and consequences using mainly the job demand-resources model, social exchange theory, social cognitive theory, and leadership theory. In the plethora of studies examining the correlates of employee engagement, particularly in Western and some Asian contexts, the most discussed antecedents included job resources, personal resources, perceived supports, learning organizations, and transformational leadership, while the personal-level outcomes considered were performance, turnover intention, organizational citizenship behavior, health, proactive behavior, innovative behavior, and knowledge creation practices. In spite of significant empirical studies on associates of work engagement, little research has been found that explored the potential link between leadership behaviors and employee engagement in the wider human resources literature (Carasco-Saul et al., 2015).

Thus, the current study focused on examining relationships among leadership styles, employee work engagement and work outcomes. Leadership was targeted because previous research (e.g. Xu and Thomas, 2011; Carasco-Saul et al., 2015) also elucidated scarcity of findings that connect leadership styles and employees work engagement. Further, the dominant capacity of leadership over other work variables and its vulnerability to modifications were taken into consideration in its selection as correlates of work engagement and outcomes. For workoutcomes, employees' job performance and innovative work behavior were considered because of their pertinence to organizational existence and progress. Job performance is the term that academics and practitioners use most commonly and widely. Nonetheless, an aggregate definition of success across jobs and roles is very difficult to conceptualize since employees are engaged in a large number of tasks including even those not listed out in their formal job description (Demerouti and Cropanzano, 2010). On the basis of review of previous studies, Kim (2014) outlined various ways of conceptualizing job performance ranging from overall performance to organizational citizenship behaviour. In the present study, as indicator

of employees' job performance, in-role performance is conceptualized as accomplishment of core tasks and activities specified in employee contract document connected to officially defined organizational outcomes ((Demerouti and Cropanzano, 2010). In addition to performing main tasks officially listed out, considering the current competitive work environment, employees are pressed to go extra mile beyond those formally recognized in their job description such as being innovative in their workplace. As Ramoorthy et al. (2005) suggested, to succeed organizations are pressuring employees to innovate their methods and operations. Janssen (2000) was of the view that to have a continuous flow of innovation and to achieve goals, individual employees need to be skilled to innovate. What is more, employees' innovative work behavior is comprehended as a specific form of extra-role performance related to discretionary employee actions in connection to generating idea, promoting, and realizing it.

In spite of evidences on the relationship between styles of leadership and work outcomes such as job performance and innovative work behavior (e.g., Khan et al., 2012; Solomon, 2016), studies explored the meditational role of work engagement in the link between leadership and work outcomes were insignificant. In connection to work engagement mediation between leadership behaviour and work outcomes, findings of the study are directing to quality of leader-subordinate relationships (Agarwal et al., 2012), transformational leadership (Salanova et al., 2011) and employees' affective commitment to their immediate supervisor (Chughtai, 2013) as antecedent factors.

Thus, specifically, in the present study the researchers proposed and tested a model in which work engagement partly mediates relationship between leadership styles (focusing on the pattern of behavior of leaders exhibited) and work outcomes labelled by task performance and innovative work behavior. Hence, the conceptual model used in the study is depicted in Figure 1.
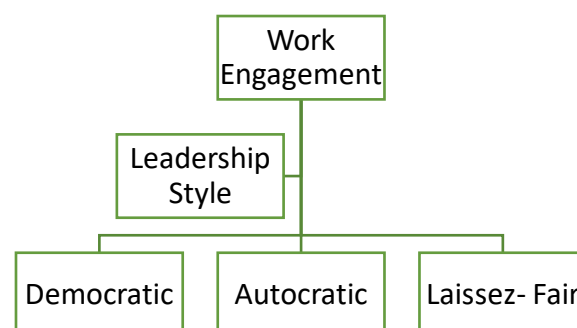
Besides, the study also examined the associations among variables of the study and the mediation of work engagement in link between leaders' style and work outcomes in two independent samples of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) professionals

from Ethiopia and South Korea to test for soundness of suggested assumptions across the nations.

Leadership is the most commonly discussed topic in the organizational sciences. Lines of research may be delineated along three major approaches: trait, behavioral and inspirational. Trait theorists seek to identify a set of universal leadership traits whereas behaviorists focused on behaviors exhibited by specific leaders. Inspirational approach deliberated on leader as one who moves adherents through their words, thoughts and conduct (Robbins et al., 2009). As Carasco-Saul et al. (2015) suggested in the 1970s and 1980s, the charismatic leadership concept emerged, emphasizing that a charisma leader, a leader who inspires, attracts and influences followers by their personal qualities are considered effective. A typical characteristic of charismatic leadership is that it has the ability to motivate subordinates to concede to goals by imparting a vision, displaying charming behavior, and being a powerful model.

As part of neo-charismatic movement, full range leadership theory, which is also referred to as the Full Range Leadership Theory of Bass and Avolio's distinguished three groups of leaders in behaviors/styles: transformational, transactional and laissez-faire (Avolio et al., 1999; Bass and Riggio, 2006; Judge and Piccolo, 2004; Solomon, 2016). The theory defines a complete range of influencing styles from influential transformational leadership to laissez-faire style.

Based on a review of various studies, Vincent-Hoper et al. (2012) portrayed transformational leaders as managers who advance and propel their followers by anticipating and communicating appealing visions, common goals, and shared values, as well as by setting an illustration of the requested behavior. Facets of transformational leadership are: idealized influence (idealized attribution and idealized behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Bass and Riggo, 2006).

Transactional leadership contains among other things, an exchange process (between leader & follower) that results in adherent compliance to leader demands, but it is not expected to create zeal and commitment to an errand objective (Trottier et al., 2008). The transactional leadership style constituted a constructive style labeled "contingent reward" and a corrective style labeled "management-by-exception."

The last style is laissez-faire, which is characterized by non-involvement, showing indifference, being absent when needed, overlooking achievements and problems as well. It is a style of leadership in which leaders offer very little direction and allow group members to make decisions on their own (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Koech & Namusonge, 2012; Solomon, 2016).

Several studies (e.g., Judge and Piccolo, 2004; Pourbarkhordari et al., 2016; Solomon, 2016) examined the influence of leadership styles on a number of employee work outcomes critical to an organization's productivity and effectiveness, such as job satisfaction, commitment, performance, and motivation. Judge and Piccolo (2004) carried out a comprehensive meta-analytic review of studies that employed a complete range of leadership from influential transformational to influential laissez-faire style to test their relative validity in predicting a number of leadership criteria: follower job satisfaction, follower satisfaction with the leader, follower motivation, leader job performance, group or organizational performance, and leader effectiveness. The researchers found out an overall positive relationship for transformational leadership and transactional leadership (contingent rewards), but a negative overall relationship between laissez-faire style and the criteria considered.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In light of the nature and purpose of the study, which aims to identify the relationship between leadership styles and employee job satisfaction, a descriptive method with a quantitative approach (questionnaire) was selected as being the most suitable scientific method by which the study objectives could be achieved. –

This study assumed that there is a relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction and that this relationship affects the employee's performance and productivity.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
- To examine the relationship between the age of respondents and their perception of the democratic leadership style of principals.
- To analyze the influence of education level on the perception of the democratic leadership style of principals.
- To investigate whether the experience of respondents affects their perception of the autocratic leadership style of principals.
- To determine if the type of institution influences respondents' perception of the autocratic leadership style of principals.

DATA ANALYSIS & TESTING

Objective 1				
	Age	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Demo_I have the opportunity to contribute to decisions that affect my career	20-30 years	16	13.97	223.50
	above 50 years	10	12.75	127.50

		Total	26		
Demo_My Supervisor doesn't take the credit for my achievements and contributions for himself		20-30 years	16	11.81	189.00
		above 50 years	9	15.11	136.00
		Total	25		
Demo_Supervisors encourage me to be my best		20-30 years	16	15.56	249.00
		above 50 years	10	10.20	102.00
		Total	26		
Demo_I am rewarded for the quality of me efforts		20-30 years	16	12.97	207.50
		above 50 years	10	14.35	143.50
		Total	26		
Demo_I am valued by my supervisor		20-30 years	16	12.97	207.50
		above 50 years	10	14.35	143.50
		Total	26		

Test Statistics[a]	Demo_I have the opportunity to contribute to decisions that affect my career	Demo_My Supervisor doesn't take the credit for my achievements and contributions for himself	Demo_Supervisors encourage me to be my best	Demo_I am rewarded for the quality of my efforts	Demo_I am valued by my supervisor
Mann-Whitney U	72.500	53.000	47.000	71.500	71.500
Wilcoxon W	127.500	189.000	102.000	207.500	207.500
Z	-.416	-1.135	-1.857	-.475	-.475
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.677	.256	.063	.635	.635
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.698[b]	.301[b]	.087[b]	.660[b]	.660[b]
a. Grouping Variable: age					
b. Not corrected for ties.					

Hypothesis Statement

- Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no association between the age of respondents and the perception of democratic leadership style of principals.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is an association between the age of respondents and the perception of democratic leadership style of principals.

A higher mean rank suggests that the group perceives a stronger presence of the democratic leadership style on that particular factor.

- For "Demo_Supervisors encourage me to be my best", younger respondents (20-30 years) had a higher mean rank (15.56) compared to older respondents (above 50 years) (10.20), indicating younger respondents perceived stronger democratic leadership.
- For "Demo_My Supervisor doesn't take the credit for my achievements", older respondents (above 50 years) had a higher mean rank (15.11) compared to younger respondents (11.81), indicating they felt their supervisors were more democratic in this aspect.

p-values for each factor:

- Demo_I have the opportunity to contribute to decisions that affect my career → p = 0.677 (Not significant)
- Demo_My Supervisor doesn't take the credit for my achievements → p = 0.256 (Not significant)
- Demo_Supervisors encourage me to be my best → p = 0.063 (Almost significant but slightly above 0.05)
- Demo_I am rewarded for the quality of my efforts → p = 0.635 (Not significant)
- Demo_I am valued by my supervisor → p = 0.635 (Not significant)

Objective 2			
	Education	N	Mean Rank
Demo_I have the opportunity to contribute to decisions that affect my career	Bachelors	18	26.69
	Masters	19	20.97
	Phd with masters	8	19.50
	Total	45	
Demo_My Supervisor doesn't take the credit for my achievements and contributions for himself	Bachelors	17	23.18
	Masters	19	21.42
	Phd with masters	8	23.63
	Total	44	
Demo_Supervisors encourage me to be my best	Bachelors	18	22.19
	Masters	19	22.08
	Phd with masters	8	27.00
	Total	45	
Demo_I am rewarded for the quality of me efforts	Bachelors	18	21.89
	Masters	19	23.45
	Phd with masters	8	24.44
	Total	45	
Demo_I am valued by my supervisor	Bachelors	18	21.89
	Masters	19	23.45
	Phd with masters	8	24.44
	Total	45	

Test Statistics[a, b]

	Demo_I have the opportunity to contribute to decisions that affect my career	Demo_My Supervisor doesn't take the credit for my achievements and contributions for himself	Demo_Supervisors encourage me to be my best	Demo_I am rewarded for the quality of me efforts	Demo_I am valued by my supervisor
Kruskal-Wallis H	2.650	.271	1.033	.280	.280
df	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.266	.873	.597	.870	.870
a. Kruskal Wallis Test					
b. Grouping Variable: Eduction					

Hypothesis Statement
- Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no association between education level and perception of the democratic leadership style of principals.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is an association between education level and perception of the democratic leadership style of principals.

The Mean Rank column indicates how respondents with different education levels ranked their experiences with democratic leadership aspects.
- Higher mean ranks suggest a more positive perception of democratic leadership.
- Lower mean ranks suggest a less positive perception.

Leadership Perception Factor	H (Kruskal-Wallis)	p-value (Asymp. Sig.)	Interpretation
Opportunity to contribute to decisions	2.650	0.266	Not significant
Supervisor doesn't take credit for my achievements	0.271	0.873	Not significant
Supervisors encourage me to be my best	1.033	0.597	Not significant
Rewarded for the quality of efforts	0.280	0.870	Not significant
Valued by my supervisor	0.280	0.870	Not significant

- All p-values are greater than 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H₀).

- There is no statistically significant association between education level and perception of democratic leadership style of principals.

Objective 3			
	Years of Exp	N	Mean Rank
Auto_My Supervisor embarrasses me in front of others	1-5 years	8	26.25
	6-10 years	18	20.00
	11-20 years	16	24.84
	more than 20 years	3	22.50
	Total	45	
Auto_My Supervisor puts corporational benefits above personal benefits	1-5 years	8	20.63
	6-10 years	18	27.50
	11-20 years	16	19.22
	more than 20 years	3	22.50
	Total	45	
Auto_My Supervisor's model subordinates must always follow his advice	1-5 years	8	14.81
	6-10 years	18	25.75
	11-20 years	16	23.25
	more than 20 years	3	27.00
	Total	45	
Auto_My Supervisor never reveals information to us	1-5 years	8	22.00
	6-10 years	18	20.86
	11-20 years	16	25.00
	more than 20 years	3	27.83
	Total	45	
Auto_My Supervisor belittles our working contributions	1-5 years	8	24.63
	6-10 years	18	24.22
	11-20 years	16	20.41
	more than 20 years	3	25.17
	Total	45	

Test Statistics[a, b]					
	Auto_My Supervisor embarrasses me in front of others	Auto_My Supervisor puts corporational benefits above personal benefits	Auto_My Supervisor's model subordinates must always follow his advice	Auto_My Supervisor never reveals information to us	Auto_My Supervisor belittles our working contributions
Kruskal-Wallis H	2.543	5.387	5.576	1.565	1.321
df	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.468	.146	.134	.667	.724
a. Kruskal Wallis Test					
b. Grouping Variable: Years of Exp					

Hypothesis Statement

- Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no association between the experience of respondents and their perception of the autocratic leadership style of principals.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is an association between the experience of respondents and their perception of the autocratic leadership style of principals.

The Mean Rank values indicate how respondents with different levels of experience perceive autocratic leadership traits.

- Higher mean ranks suggest that the group perceives stronger autocratic leadership traits.
- Lower mean ranks suggest a weaker perception of autocratic leadership traits.

Mean Ranks Observations:

- "My supervisor embarrasses me in front of others":
  o The 1-5 years' experience group had the highest mean rank (26.25), indicating they feel more embarrassed by their supervisors compared to other groups.
  o The 6-10 years experience group had the lowest mean rank (20.00), meaning they perceive less embarrassment.

- "My supervisor puts corporate benefits above personal benefits":
  - The 6-10 years' experience group had the highest mean rank (27.50), suggesting they feel Supervisors prioritize corporate benefits over personal benefits the most.
  - The 11-20 years' experience group had the lowest mean rank (19.22), meaning they feel this happens the least.
- "My supervisor's model subordinates must always follow his advice":
  - The more than 20 years' experience group had the highest mean rank (27.00), suggesting they strongly perceive that subordinates must always follow the Supervisor's advice.

- The 1-5 years' experience group had the lowest mean rank (14.81), meaning they perceive this less.
- "My supervisor never reveals information to us":
  - The more than 20 years' experience group had the highest mean rank (27.83), indicating they feel more strongly that Supervisors do not share information.
  - The 6-10 years' experience group had the lowest mean rank (20.86).
- "My supervisor belittles our working contributions":
  - The more than 20 years' experience group had the highest mean rank (25.17), but overall, the rank differences are small, suggesting similar perceptions across experience levels.

Autocratic Leadership Perception Factor	H (Kruskal-Wallis)	p-value (Asymp. Sig.)	Interpretation
Supervisor embarrasses me in front of others	2.543	0.468	Not significant
Supervisor puts corporate benefits above personal benefits	5.387	0.146	Not significant
Supervisor's model subordinates must always follow advice	5.576	0.134	Not significant
Supervisor never reveals information	1.565	0.667	Not significant
Supervisor belittles our contributions	1.321	0.724	Not significant

Since p-values are greater than 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H_0), there is no statistically significant association between years of experience and the perception of the autocratic leadership style of principals.

Objective 4			
	Type of Inst	N	Mean Rank
Auto_My Supervisor embarrasses me in front of others	UG	26	22.79
	PG	19	23.29
	Total	45	
Auto_My Supervisor puts corporational benefits above personal benefits	UG	26	22.79
	PG	19	23.29
	Total	45	
Auto_My Supervisor's model subordinates must always follow his advice	UG	26	24.12
	PG	19	21.47
	Total	45	
Auto_My Supervisor never reveals information to us	UG	26	23.77
	PG	19	21.95
	Total	45	
Auto_My Supervisor belittles our working contributions	UG	26	22.88
	PG	19	23.16
	Total	45	

Test Statistics[a,b]	Auto_My Supervisor embarrasses me in front of others	Auto_My Supervisor puts corporational benefits above personal benefits	Auto_My Supervisor's model subordinates must always follow his advice	Auto_My Supervisor never reveals information to us	Auto_My Supervisor belittles our working contributions
Kruskal-Wallis H	.023	.023	.592	.254	.006
df	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.879	.879	.442	.614	.936

a. Kruskal Wallis Test
b. Grouping Variable: Type of Inst

The Mean Rank column indicates how respondents from UG and PG institutes ranked their perception of different autocratic leadership traits.

Observations from Mean Ranks:

- "My Supervisor embarrasses me in front of others":
  - UG respondents (Mean Rank = 22.79) and PG respondents (Mean Rank = 23.29) have nearly identical perceptions.
- "My Supervisor puts corporate benefits above personal benefits":
  - UG (22.79) and PG (23.29) again show minimal difference.
- "My Supervisor's model subordinates must always follow his advice":
  - UG respondents had a slightly higher Mean Rank (24.12) than PG respondents (21.47), but the difference is small.
- "My Supervisor never reveals information to us":

- UG respondents had a Mean Rank of 23.77, while PG respondents had 21.95, again showing minimal variation.
- "My Supervisor belittles our working contributions":
  - UG (22.88) and PG (23.16) have nearly identical perceptions.

Hypothesis Statement

- Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no association between types of institute of respondents and their perception of the autocratic leadership style of principals.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is no association between types of institute of respondents and their perception of the autocratic leadership style of principals.
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Autocratic Leadership Perception Factor	H (Kruskal-Wallis)	p-value (Asymp. Sig.)	Interpretation
Supervisor embarrasses me in front of others	0.023	0.879	Not significant
Supervisor puts corporate benefits above personal benefits	0.023	0.879	Not significant
Supervisor's model subordinates must always follow advice	0.592	0.442	Not significant
Supervisor never reveals information	0.254	0.614	Not significant
Supervisor belittles our contributions	0.006	0.936	Not significant

Since p-values are greater than 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H_0), there is no statistically significant association between the type of institute (UG vs. PG) and respondents' perception of the autocratic leadership style of principals.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

- The results suggest that age does not significantly impact how respondents perceive democratic leadership style of principals. However, younger employees may feel more encouraged by supervisors than older employees, which could be an area for further investigation.
- Institute may still consider different leadership approaches tailored to different age groups to ensure equitable experiences.
- The respondents with different education levels do not perceive democratic leadership differently. While minor variations exist (e.g., PhD holders feel more encouraged by supervisors, bachelor's holders feel they contribute more to decisions), these differences are not statistically meaningful.
- Institutions should focus on leadership development strategies that are effective across all education levels rather than targeting specific groups based on education.
- The employees with different levels of experience do not significantly differ in their perceptions of autocratic leadership behaviours.

- However,
  - ✓ Less experienced employees (1-5 years) feel more embarrassed by Supervisors.
  - ✓ More experienced employees (20+ years) feel that Supervisors do not reveal information and enforce strict obedience more than other groups.
- The respondents from UG and PG institutions do not differ in their perception of autocratic leadership behaviours. Since the differences are not significant, institutions may not need to modify leadership strategies specifically based on UG vs. PG levels.
- Any leadership development initiatives should focus on improving leadership practices across both UG and PG levels rather than tailoring them to a specific educational level.

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