

# A Comparative Analysis of the Leadership Practices of the Principals of Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas in Kerala, India

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to compare the perceived leadership practices using the Kouzes and Posner Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI-Observer) between the principals of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas in the state of Kerala, India. In this quantitative survey study, all the postgraduate teachers (PGTs) of five Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNV) and five Kendriya Vidyalayas (KV) filled up the LPI-Observer. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, t-test, and rank ordering.

This study established that the leadership practices of the principals of JNV and KV differ significantly. Also, the leadership practices of the principals of both JNV and KV are significantly different from that of the other leaders in the world. The rank order of the leadership practices of the principals of both JNV and KV and that of the other leaders in the world differ. Principals of KV are found to outperform the principals of JNV and other leaders in the world in their frequent engagement in the leadership practice of Challenging the Process. The leadership practice Modeling the Way stands second in rank order in the data of JNV, KV, and other leaders in the world.

**Keyword:** Principal, Leadership Practices, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Kerala, School Leadership

## Introduction

Every institution has certain aims and ideals before it and for the speedy and successful achievement of these ideals,

some sort of administration are essential. The school is one of the important social institutions and as such it must have well organised administrative machinery. Effective school leadership is increasingly viewed as key to large-scale education reforms and to improved educational outcomes. In the present study the researcher intends to look into the leadership practices of principals of Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas in the state of Kerala, India. Both types of schools are under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

The Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) are a system of alternate schools for the gifted students in India. Established in 1985 by the government of India, now there are 593 JNVs, one in each district of the country (except in the state of Tamil Nadu). JNVs are fully residential and co-educational schools with classes from VI to XII standard. The objectives of JNV are to identify and nurture talent particularly in rural areas, to promote national integration, and to establish institutions of high quality that would serve as pace setters and models at district levels. The teachers are required to stay in the campus. Kendriya Vidyalayas cater to the educational needs of the children of transferable central government employees, including defence and paramilitary personnel, by providing a common programme of education throughout the country. Incepted in 1965, now there are 1093 KVs all over India.

A lot of research shows that the success of a school depends on its leadership. Effective teaching and learning, school climate, student success, school effectiveness, and teacher satisfaction are all found to be correlated with principal

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leadership (Mcinerney, 2003; Norton, 2002; Taylor & John, 2002). Very few studies have been conducted in India on school principal leadership. No study deals with the principal leadership practices in JNVs and KVs. The knowledge of the type and level of leadership practices engaged in by the principals will enable the educational authorities to prepare training modules and impart pre-service and in-service leadership training to the principals.

## Theoretical Background

In contrast to the earlier leadership theories on traits or characteristics or situational approaches which focused on the leaders, the transformational leadership theories concentrated on the leader-follower relationship. Transformational leadership theories originated in 1970s. They are also called 'New Leadership' (Bryman, 1992), 'Neocharismatic Theories' (House & Aditya, 1997) and 'Charismatic and Transformational Theories' (Yukl, 1998). They explain the exceptional influence some leaders have on subordinates. They search for ways to help motivate followers by satisfying higher order needs and more fully engaging them in the process of work (Bass, 1985; Horner, 1997). Transformational Leadership is based on the personal values, beliefs, and qualities of the leader, rather than on an exchange process between leader and followers. It induces followers to transcend their interests for that of the greater good (Krzisnik, 2007). Cotton (2003) submitted that researchers found that transformational leadership in school promoted greater student achievement and proved to be more effective than bartering between principal and staff. The major transformational theories include those by House (1977), Burns (1978), Conger and Kanungo (1987), Kouzes and Posner (1987), Bennis and Nanus (1985), and Bass (1985).

The concept of leadership and leadership practices used in this study is based on the book "The Leadership Challenge" by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, published in 1995. In their view, leadership is 'a process ordinary people use when they are bringing forth the best from themselves and others' (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). The authors were the inventors of the Personal-Best Leadership Experience Survey. They wanted to know what people did when they were at their 'personal best' in leading others. From an analysis of the personal-best cases, they developed a model of leadership. Kouzes and Posner found that leaders do exhibit certain distinct practices when they are doing their best. And this behaviour varies little from industry to industry, profession to profession, community to community, and country to country. Good leadership is an understandable and a universal process (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Based on a database of ten thousand leaders and fifty thousand constituents, Kouzes and Posner uncovered five fundamental practices that enable leaders to get extraordinary things done. Embedded in each of these five practices were two leader behaviours which Kouzes & Posner (2003a) termed as "Ten Commitments" of leadership. The 5 practices and 10 commitments are shown in Table 1.

Kouzes and Posner continually gathered data collected through the Leadership Practices Inventory all over the world and updated their database with 1.1 million respondents. This database forms the LPI normative data. This indicates how and to what extent the leaders in various fields of activity and nationality engage in the five leadership practices as put forth by Kouzes and Posner.

**Table 1: The 5 Practices and 10 Commitments of Leaders**

| <i>Leadership Practice</i> | <i>Leader Commitment</i>  |
|----------------------------|---|
| Model the Way              | Find your voice by clarifying your personal values.<br>Set the example by aligning actions with shared values.  |
| Inspire a Shared Vision    | Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities.<br>Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.                                |
| Challenge the Process      | Search for opportunities by seeking innovative ways to change, grow and improve.<br>Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from mistakes. |
| Enable Others to Act       | Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust.<br>Strengthen others by sharing power and discretion.   |
| Encourage the Heart        | Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence.<br>Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community.                           |

Source: *The Leadership Challenge* by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. Copyright 1995

## Objectives

The present study intends to achieve the following objectives.

1. To study if any of the 5 leadership practices of the principals of JNVs and KVs differ significantly.
2. To study if any of the five leadership practices of the principals of JNV differ significantly from the LPI normative data.
3. To study if any of the five leadership practices of the principals of KV differ significantly from the LPI normative data.
4. To compare the rank order of the 5 leadership practices of the principals of JNVs and KVs.
5. To compare the rank order of the 5 leadership practices of the principals of JNV with that of the LPI normative data.
6. To compare the rank order of the 5 leadership practices of the principals of KV with that of the LPI normative data.

## Hypotheses

H1: There is no statistically significant difference between any of the five leadership practices of the principals of JNVs and KVs.

H2: There is no statistically significant difference between any of the five leadership practices of the principals of JNVs and LPI normative data.

H3: There is no statistically significant difference between any of the five leadership practices of the principals of JNVs and LPI normative data.

H4: There is no difference between the rank order of the five leadership practices of the principals of JNVs and KVs.

H5: There is no difference between the rank order of the five leadership practices of the principals of JNVs and LPI normative data.

H6: There is no difference between the rank order of the five leadership practices of the principals of KVs and LPI normative data.

## Methodology

Five districts were randomly selected out of the 14 districts of Kerala. The Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya and one Kendriya Vidyalaya of that district were visited for data collection. All the senior secondary teachers who had completed one year in that school were selected as samples. Thus there were 32 JNV teachers and 42 KV teachers who completed the questionnaire. The Leadership Practices Inventory-Observer (Kouzes & Posner, 2002) was used to measure teachers' perception of the leadership practices of their principals. Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, t-test, and rank ordering.

## Result

In the leadership practices inventory, the total thirty statements are intended to rate the five leadership practices. Six statements rated each of the practices. Each respondent teacher rated his/her principal's frequency of engaging in the leadership practices on a ten point scale, ranging from 'almost never' (1) to 'almost always' (10). Therefore, each leadership practice could be scored in a range of 6 to 60.

**Table 2: Respondents' Ratings of Leadership Practices of Principals by Type of School**

|                           | Navodaya Vidyalaya<br>(N=32) |       | Kendriya Vidyalaya<br>(N=42) |       | T value | P value | Stat. Signif. of difference |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-------|---------|---------|-----------------------------|
|                           | Mean                         | SD    | Mean                         | SD    |         |         |                             |
| Modeling the Way          | 42.31                        | 12.63 | 47.95                        | 8.28  | 2.32    | 0.02    | Significant                 |
| Inspiring a Shared Vision | 40.19                        | 12.29 | 43.76                        | 10.30 | 1.36    | 0.18    | Not significant             |
| Challenging the Process   | 39.31                        | 13.08 | 49.64                        | 6.46  | 4.46    | <0.0001 | Significant                 |
| Enabling Others to Act    | 43.63                        | 11.28 | 45.38                        | 10.67 | 0.68    | 0.50    | Not significant             |
| Encouraging the Heart     | 40.66                        | 14.33 | 44.21                        | 11.57 | 1.18    | 0.24    | Not significant             |
| LPI                       | 41.22                        | 12.72 | 46.19                        | 9.46  | 1.93    | 0.058   | Not significant             |

**Table 3: Comparison of LPI Score of Principals of JNVs with that of LPI Normative Data**

|                           | Normative Data |      | Navodaya Vidyalaya |       | T value | P value | Stat. Signif. of difference |
|---------------------------|----------------|------|--------------------|-------|---------|---------|-----------------------------|
|                           | Mean           | SD   | Mean               | SD    |         |         |                             |
| Modeling the Way          | 46.70          | 7.10 | 42.31              | 12.63 | 3.34    | <0.001  | Significant                 |
| Inspiring a Shared Vision | 43.59          | 8.80 | 40.19              | 12.29 | 2.18    | 0.029   | Significant                 |
| Challenging the Process   | 44.69          | 7.25 | 39.31              | 13.08 | 4.18    | <0.0001 | Significant                 |
| Enabling Others to Act    | 49.34          | 6.42 | 43.63              | 11.28 | 5.01    | <0.0001 | Significant                 |
| Encouraging the Heart     | 45.79          | 8.20 | 40.66              | 14.33 | 3.522   | <0.001  | Significant                 |
| LPI                       | 46.02          | 7.55 | 41.22              | 12.72 | 3.58    | <0.001  | Significant                 |

**Hypotheses 1:** There is no statistically significant difference in any of the five leadership practices between the principals of JNVs and KVs.

The score for five leadership practices obtained by the principals of Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas is presented in Table 2.

In both types of schools, the principals frequently engage in all the five leadership practices. The highest score is for Kendriya Vidyalaya principals for the practice Challenging the Process. The lowest score is for Navodaya Vidyalaya principals for the practice Challenging the Process. Kendriya Vidyalaya principals scored higher than the Navodaya Vidyalaya teachers in all the five leadership practices. The highest difference between means of two types of schools is for the leadership practice Challenging the Process. The lowest difference between means of two types of schools is for the leadership practice Enabling Others to Act.

The highest intra-school variation (which is expressed by the Standard Deviation) for both NV and KV is for the practice Encouraging the Heart. The lowest intra-school variation for NV is for Enabling Others to Act. The lowest intra-school variation for KV is for the practice Challenging the Process.

The critical t value at 72 degree of freedom is 1.99 at 0.05 level of confidence. The LPI total score of principals of KVs are higher than that of the principals of JNV. But the difference is not statistically significant. The difference between the mean scores of JNV and KV principals is statistically significant for the leadership practices of Modeling the way and Challenging the Process. The other three leadership practices show differences that are not statistically significant. So the null hypothesis is rejected.

This means that the principals of KV engage more frequently in the leadership practices of Modeling the Way and Challenging the Process than the JNV principals. Although the KV principals show higher score in the engagement in the other three leadership practices, the difference is not statistically significant.

**Hypotheses 2:** There is no statistically significant difference between any of the five leadership practices of the principals of JNVs and LPI normative data.

The LPI score of the principals of the JNVs and that of the LPI normative data is presented in Table 3.

The critical t value at 0.05 level of confidence is 1.96. The difference between the mean scores of LPI normative data and that of the JNV principals for all the five leadership practices is statistically significant. In all the five leadership practices, the score of normative data is higher than that of the JNV principals. The LPI total score of the normative data is also higher than and statistically different from that of the JNV principals. So the null hypothesis is rejected.

This means that JNV principals engage in all the five leadership practices less frequently compared to other leaders in the world.

**Hypotheses 3:** There is no statistically significant difference between any of the five leadership practices of the principals of KVs and LPI normative data.

The LPI score of the principals of the KVs and that of the LPI normative data is presented in Table 4.

The critical t value at 0.05 level of confidence is 1.96. The difference between the mean scores of LPI normative data and that of the KV principals for Challenging the Process and Enabling Others to Act leadership practices is

**Table 4: Comparison of LPI Score of Principals of KVs with that of LPI Normative Data**

| Leadership Practices      | Normative Data |      | Kendriya Vidyalaya |       | T value | P value | Stat. Signif. of difference |
|---------------------------|----------------|------|--------------------|-------|---------|---------|-----------------------------|
|                           | Mean           | SD   | Mean               | SD    |         |         |                             |
| Modeling the Way          | 46.70          | 7.10 | 47.95              | 8.28  | 1.138   | 0.255   | Not significant             |
| Inspiring a Shared Vision | 43.59          | 8.80 | 43.76              | 10.30 | 0.125   | 0.901   | Not significant             |
| Challenging the Process   | 44.69          | 7.25 | 49.64              | 6.46  | 4.417   | <0.0001 | Significant                 |
| Enabling Others to Act    | 49.34          | 6.42 | 45.38              | 10.67 | 3.975   | <0.0001 | Significant                 |
| Encouraging the Heart     | 45.79          | 8.20 | 44.21              | 11.57 | 1.244   | 0.214   | Not significant             |
| LPI                       | 46.02          | 7.55 | 46.19              | 9.46  | 0.145   | 0.884   | Not significant             |

statistically significant. The normative data mean score is higher for Enabling Others to Act whereas KV principals' mean score is higher for Challenging the Process. The score of the other three leadership practices and the LPI total score show no statistically significant difference with the normative data. So the null hypothesis is rejected.

KV principals engage in Challenging the Process leadership practice more frequently compared to other leaders in the world. But their engagement in Enabling Others to Act leadership practice is less frequent compared to that of the leaders in the world. The frequency of engagement in the other three leadership practices is more or less same.

**Hypotheses 4:** There is no difference in the rank order of the five leadership practices of the principals of JNVs and KVs.

The rank order of the leadership practices of the principals of JNVs and KVs is given in Table 5.

The rank order of the leadership practices of principals in NV and KV is different except for the practice Modeling the Way which stands as the second most frequently engaged in leadership practice in both JNV and KV.

In Navodaya Vidyalayas, the leadership practice Enabling Others to Act is the one engaged in most frequently by the

principals followed by Modeling the Way, Encouraging the Heart, and Inspiring a Shared Vision. Challenging the Process is the practice least engaged in by the principals of Navodaya Vidyalayas. In Kendriya Vidyalayas, the leadership practice Challenging the Process is the one engaged in most frequently by the principals followed by Modeling the Way, Enabling Others to Act and Encouraging the Heart. Inspiring a Shared Vision is the practice least engaged in by the principals of Kendriya Vidyalayas. So the null hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypotheses 5:** There is no difference in the rank order of the five leadership practices of the principals of JNVs and LPI normative data.

The rank order of the leadership practices of the principals of JNVs and that of the LPI normative data is given in Table 6.

Overall, the rank order of leadership practices of principals of NV is comparable with that of the normative data. The leadership practices of Enabling Others to Act, Modeling the Way, and Encouraging the Heart stand in the first three ranks respectively in both the normative data and the data of Navodaya Vidyalaya. Challenging the Process and Inspiring a Shared Vision interchanged their positions in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> ranks. So the null hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 5: Comparison of the Rank Order of the Leadership Practices of the Principals of JNVs and KVs**

| Rank | Navodaya Vidyalaya (Mean)         | Kendriya Vidyalaya (Mean)         |
|------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1    | Enabling Others to Act (43.63)    | Challenging the Process (49.64)   |
| 2    | Modeling the Way (42.31)          | Modeling the Way (47.95)          |
| 3    | Encouraging the Heart (40.66)     | Enabling Others to Act (45.38)    |
| 4    | Inspiring a Shared Vision (40.19) | Encouraging the Heart (44.21)     |
| 5    | Challenging the Process (39.31)   | Inspiring a Shared Vision (43.76) |

**Table 6: Comparison of the Rank Order of the Leadership Practices of the Principals of JNVs and that of the Normative Data**

| Rank | LPI Normative Data (Mean)         | Navodaya Vidyalaya (Mean)         |
|------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1    | Enabling Others to Act (49.34)    | Enabling Others to Act (43.63)    |
| 2    | Modeling the Way (46.70)          | Modeling the Way (42.31)          |
| 3    | Encouraging the Heart (45.79)     | Encouraging the Heart (40.66)     |
| 4    | Challenging the Process (44.69)   | Inspiring a Shared Vision (40.19) |
| 5    | Inspiring a Shared Vision (43.59) | Challenging the Process (39.31)   |

**Table 7: Comparison of the Rank Order of the Leadership Practices of the Principals of KVs and that of the Normative Data**

| Rank | LPI Normative Data (Mean)         | Kendriya Vidyalaya (Mean)         |
|------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1    | Enabling Others to Act (49.34)    | Challenging the Process (49.64)   |
| 2    | Modeling the Way (46.70)          | Modeling the Way (47.95)          |
| 3    | Encouraging the Heart (45.79)     | Enabling Others to Act (45.38)    |
| 4    | Challenging the Process (44.69)   | Encouraging the Heart (44.21)     |
| 5    | Inspiring a Shared Vision (43.59) | Inspiring a Shared Vision (43.76) |

**Hypotheses 6:** There is no difference between the rank order of the five leadership practices of the principals of KVs and LPI normative data.

The rank order of the leadership practices of the principals of KVs and that of the LPI normative data is given in Table 7.

The leadership practices of KV principals that share common ranks with LPI normative data are Modeling the Way (2<sup>nd</sup> rank) and Inspiring a Shared Vision (5<sup>th</sup> rank). Enabling Others to Act which stands first in normative data descended to 3<sup>rd</sup> rank in KV data. The leadership practice Challenging the Process which stands fourth in normative data ascended to first rank in KV data. So the null hypothesis is rejected.

For easy comparison of the rank order of the leadership practices of the leaders of JNV and KV with LPI normative data, Table 8 is helpful.

## Major Findings of the Study

1. The leadership practices of the principals of JNV and KV differ significantly. The principals of KV engage more frequently in the leadership practices of Modeling the Way and Challenging the Process than the principals of JNV.
2. The leadership practices of the principals of JNV and that of the leaders in the world differ significantly. JNV principals engage in all the five leadership practices less frequently compared to other leaders in the world.
3. The leadership practices of the principals of KV and that of the leaders in the world differ significantly. KV principals engage in Challenging the Process leadership practice more frequently compared to other leaders in the world. But their engagement in Enabling Others to Act leadership practice is less

**Table 8: Rank Order Comparison of NV and KV with LPI Normative Data**

| Rank | Navodaya Vidyalaya (Mean)         | LPI Normative Data (Mean)         | Kendriya Vidyalaya (Mean)         |
|------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1    | Enabling Others to Act (43.63)    | Enabling Others to Act (49.34)    | Challenging the Process (49.64)   |
| 2    | Modeling the Way (42.31)          | Modeling the Way (46.70)          | Modeling the Way (47.95)          |
| 3    | Encouraging the Heart (40.66)     | Encouraging the Heart (45.79)     | Enabling Others to Act (45.38)    |
| 4    | Inspiring a Shared Vision (40.19) | Challenging the Process (44.69)   | Encouraging the Heart (44.21)     |
| 5    | Challenging the Process (39.31)   | Inspiring a Shared Vision (43.59) | Inspiring a Shared Vision (43.76) |

frequent compared to that of the other leaders in the world.

4. The rank order of the leadership practices of the principals of JNVs and KVs differs.
5. The rank order of the leadership practices of the principals of JNVs and that of the other leaders in the world differs.
6. The rank order of the leadership practices of the principals of KVs and that of the other leaders in the world differs.
7. The leadership practice Modeling the Way stands second in rank order in the data of JNV, KV and other leaders in the world.

## Implications

There is a need to intensify the leadership training programmes given to the principals of the types of schools under study. They should be trained to use these leadership practices more frequently and effectively. The training programmes can be fine-tuned to impart skill in the utilisation of practices that each type of principals are found to underperform compared to the other leaders in the world.

## Suggestions for Future Research

Principals of KV are found to outperform the principals of JNV and other leaders in the world in their frequent engagement in the leadership practice of Challenging the Process. The conditions that enable them to challenge the status quo, innovate and take risks have to be explored in detail. Also the conditions that restrict the JNV principals from engaging more frequently in all the leadership practices has to be explored.

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