

Role of Qualification and Experience of College Principals and Directors in the Choice of Leadership Style - A Study on Colleges of Punjab

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Abstract

Every principal or director of a college has distinct style of leadership. In the present study, it was found that transformational style of leadership was the most common style of leadership among the college principals and directors and was closely followed by transactional style. Laissez Faire was not a favourable style among college principals and directors as resulted from the study. Qualification and experience of the college principals were not found to be related with the leadership style.

Keywords: Leadership, Qualification, Experience, Transactional Style, Laissez Faire, Transformational Style, Principals, Directors

Overview

A college principal is expected to be a role model for his staff and students. He has to deal with the colleagues who are either equally or in some cases more experienced and educated. He has to deal with the very demanding, volatile and fragile youth (teachers and students) and at the same time, he must act as a torchbearer for the institute. Role of the leader in the education sector has become more challenging nowadays. According to Mitgang (2012), no educational institute can progress without the effective leadership of the institute. He cited Linda D. Hammond where she mentioned that teaching quality is dependent upon the direction of the leadership. A good educational leader brings in good teachers, on which organisation's

performance is dependent. Akinnubi, Oyeniran Fashiku and Durosaro (2012) maintained that the gender, experience and qualification of the principal affect the functioning of the organisation. It is very important to identify the successful educational administrators of today with most prevalent leadership style and its relationship with the other operating variables.

Definition of Leadership, Experience

Lee (1997) stated after a review of modern definitions that leadership is an intensely human enterprise and does not fit neatly into definitions and boxes. Leaders have all the spontaneity, unpredictability, frailty, vulnerability, and potential that are possible in the human race. According to Newstrom and Davis (2005), leadership is the catalyst that transforms potential into reality. Quinn (2004) stated that leadership is a temporary condition. When certain skills and competencies are exhibited, one can be said to be showing leadership and when they are not demonstrated, leadership is absent. Robbins and Sanghi (2005) mentioned that Ohio state studies, Fiedler's model, path goal theory, and leader participation model have concerned transactional leaders. Transformational leaders have profound and extraordinary effect on their followers and they inspire their followers to transcend their self-interests for the good of the organisation. Experience is the knowledge or mastery of an event or subject gained through involvement in or exposure to it. Experience is the knowledge or skill acquired by a period of practical experience of something, especially that gained in

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a particular profession. Qualification is an ability, characteristic, or experience that makes you suitable for a particular job or activity. Qualification denotes fitness for purpose through fulfillment of necessary conditions such as attainment of a certain age, taking of an oath, completion of required schooling or training, or acquisition of a degree or diploma.

Review of Literature

Hunt (1996) in his study on healthcare sector found that style of the leadership affects the job turnover, satisfaction, performance, and service quality in the organisation. Bass (1985) argued that transformational and transactional leadership styles were single continuum rather than mutually independent continua. Hessebain and Cohen (1998) stated that leaders always challenge the status quo and have the ability to see things differently. They push themselves and others out of the comfort zone and are always ready for learning and fresh ideas. Goleman (2002) identified six different type of leadership styles viz. visionary leader, coaching leader, affiliative leader, democratic leader, pace setting leader, and commanding leader. All these types of leadership style are contingent to the situation. John (2001) claimed that behavioural and interpersonal skills are most often cited as essential for successful knowledge management (acquisition). But unfortunately, little was known about the roles played by leadership in the process of knowledge acquisition. Results of his findings indicated that the leadership styles that involved human interaction and encouraged participative decision-making processes were positively related to the skills and traits that were essential for knowledge management. Huberts and Karin (2007) found that role modeling, strictness, and openness of leaders influence the behaviour of police officers, but the impact of variables on different types of integrity violations varies. Employees appeared to copy the leader's integrity standards in their daily interaction with one another. Vroom and Jago (1998) found that managers must adapt their leadership styles to fit the demands of the situations they face. One of the necessary manifestations of this view was the need to adapt the form and degree of participation in decision making by subordinates, to the personalities of the subordinates, the decisions to be made and the general organisational circumstances. Castiglione (2006) in his study on librarians found that they were experimenting with organisational learning

and new management styles in an attempt to cope with rapid changes. Transformational management styles could be learned and applied by library administrators. Gabrielsson *et al.* (2009) mentioned that two interactive dimensions at the heart of a leader's behaviour – assertiveness and responsiveness – are foundations of that person's leadership style. Yoram and Neumann (1999) examined university presidents' strategic style and concluded that it is associated with the college bottom line. The pattern is very distinct: maintainers are directly associated with declining institutions while integrators and net casters are associated with successful institutions. Hasan and Grace (2006) found transactional leadership style to be the most frequently used leadership style while transformational leadership was exhibited less frequently; and laissez-faire was noted as the least commonly occurring leadership style and more frequently among the leaders with low educational background, low previous managerial experience, and employee leaders. Transformational leadership was found to induce the greatest satisfaction, willingness to exert extra effort, and effectiveness among employees. Hala's (2007) results revealed IATA managers preferred transformational leadership style rather than transactional style. In Jordan, there was no clear preference for transactional or transformational style as both were being used. Literature of Cohen and Tichy (1998) had identified nine functional and eleven accompanying attributes of servant leadership. These are *Functional attributes*: 1. vision, 2. honesty, 3. trust, 4. integrity, 5. service, 6. modelling, 7. pioneering, 8. appreciation of others, and 9. empowerment. Servant leadership is a concept that can potentially change organisations and societies because it stimulates both personal and organisational metamorphoses. Heller *et al.* (1993) revealed in their study that leadership style of the principal was not very important but the behaviour of the principal with his teachers was more important. If the principal had warmth, friendliness, support and good understanding with the teachers, then they felt more comfortable. This finding was in congruence with findings of Hersey and Blanchard (1988) where they found that theory of leadership should draw inferences from the characteristics of the followers and the situations rather than the overall leadership style of the leader. Garcia, Duncan, Carmody, and Ree (2014) in their research on elementary school teachers found that leadership style and personality that the principal projects impact the perception of the follower. Neuroticism (emotional

stability) was the major predictor of the leadership style. There was relationship of emotional stability of leaders with the transformational and transactional leaderships. More the emotional stable leaders were perceived, more they were rated to be transactional and transformational leaders. Bass (1999) have mentioned that women tend to be more of transformational type of leaders than the men. Togneri and Anderson (2003) maintained that effective use of data by the principal can help them to find gaps in the performance, setting goals and improvement in the system. Transactional leadership style is the most advocated leadership style. Instructional leadership style

is no doubt the best suited style for the educational leaders as it keeps them abreast of the latest developments, so that they may not loose the focus of teaching and learning.

Research Methodology

Population for the study was all the colleges of the state of Punjab, affiliated to the state, central and private universities. At the time of research, there were eight government universities and five private universities in Punjab. There were 1041 colleges in Punjab at the time of study.

Table 1: Number of Colleges in Punjab

<i>Name of University</i>	<i>Government Colleges</i>	<i>Government Aided colleges</i>	<i>Self-financed /Pvt. Colleges</i>	<i>Total No. Of Colleges</i>
Punjabi University, Patiala.	23	17	152	192
Punjab University, Chandigarh.	15	59	114	188
Punjab Technical University, Kapurthala.	2	0	369	371
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.	10	39	105	154
Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot	7	0	129	136

Sample for the Study and Statistical Tool

Table 1 shows the distribution of colleges in the state of Punjab. Punjab can be divided into three regions i.e. Majha, Malwa, and Doaba. The major districts of Punjab are Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Patiala, Bathinda, and Sangrur. Districts like Amritsar, Ferozepur, and Gurdaspur belong to Majha region. Districts Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala and Ropar fall in Doaba region. Bathinda, Faridkot, Sangrur, Mohali, Barnala, Chandigarh, and Patiala are the major cities of Malwa region. A random sample of 243 college principals and directors was taken.

Correspondence analysis was the statistical tool applied for the analysis of data.

Hypothesis

H01: Leadership style and qualification of the college principal are related.

H1: Leadership style and qualification of the college principal is not related.

H02: Leadership style and experience of the college principal is related.

H2: Leadership style and experience of the college principal is not related.

Leadership Styles being Followed by the College Principals and Directors and it's Comparison with the Educational Background

Table 2: Leadership Styles of Principals and Directors

<i>Qualification</i>	<i>Leadership Style</i>		<i>Laissez Faire</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>Transactional</i>	<i>Transformational</i>		
PhD	67 (71%)	90 (63%)	6 (100%)	163
PG	27 (29%)	53 (37%)	0	80
Total	94	143	6	243

According to Table 2, transformational style of leadership (59%) was the most common style of the leadership being practiced by the college principals and directors as reported by the respondents in the survey. Second common style of leadership was transactional leadership style (39%).

Laissez faire style of leadership was followed by only two and half percent of the respondents. Out of those principals and directors who were practicing transformational style of leadership 63 percent had doctorate degree or above. Remaining 37 percent were postgraduates.

Among transactional style practicing principals and directors of the institutes, 71 percent of the respondents had doctorate degree or above while 29 percent of them were postgraduates. All the principals were Ph.D. who were reported to be practicing laissez faire style of leadership. Majority of the principals with doctorate level educational background were following transformational style of leadership, followed by transactional style of leadership. Similar was the trend among the postgraduate principals with majority reported to be preferring transformational leadership style over transactional leadership. Surprisingly none of the postgraduate principals was reported to be practicing laissez faire style of leadership.

Correspondence Analysis

Table 3: Test of Independence between Rows and Columns

Chi-square (Observed value)	4.806
Chi-square (Critical value)	5.991
DF	2
p-value	0.09
Alpha	0.05

Test Interpretation

H₀: Qualification and leadership style are independent.

H_a: There is a link between qualification and leadership style.

Table 3 reveals that computed value is more than significant value so null hypothesis is accepted. Hence qualification of the college principal is independent of the leadership style.

Table 4: Relative Distances of Leadership Styles

Leadership Style	Weight (relative)	Distance	Sq-Distance	Inertia	Relative inertia
Transactional	0.387	0.089	0.008	0.003	0.156
Transformational	0.588	0.088	0.008	0.005	0.231
Laissez Faire	0.025	0.701	0.491	0.012	0.613

Total inertia = 0.02

In Table 4, leadership styles are displayed and their relative distances are shown. It is obvious from the table that transformational and transactional styles of leadership are very close to each other.

Table 5: Eigen Values and Percentages of Inertia

	F1
Eigen value	0.02
Inertia (%)	100
Cumulative %	100

The eigen values correspond to the variance extracted by each factor.

Results for the Qualification

Table 6: Weights, Distances and Squared Distances to the Origin, Inertias and Relative Inertias (rows)

Qualification	Weight (relative)	Distance	Sq-Distance	Inertia	Relative inertia
PhD	0.671	0.099	0.01	0.00651	0.329
PG	0.329	0.201	0.04	0.01327	0.671

Table 6 indicates that qualification factor is widely dispersed and it is far from similarity.

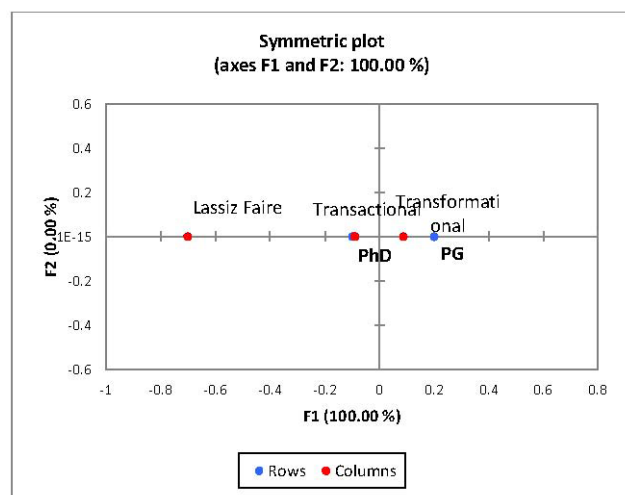
Table 7: Chi-square Distances for Qualification

Qualification of Principals	PhD	PG
PhD	0	0.299
PG	0.299	0

Results for the Leadership Style

Table 8: Weights, Distances and Squared Distances to the Origin, Inertias and Relative Inertias (columns)

Leadership Style	Transactional	Transformational	Laissez Faire
Transactional	0	0.177	0.611
Transformational	0.177	0	0.789
Laissez Faire	0.611	0.789	0

**Fig. 1: Symmetric Plot**

In Fig. 1 (symmetric plot), it is clear that college principals and directors with doctoral degree have transactional leadership style which is almost superimposed. Postgraduate principals were found nearest to transformational leadership on the graph. Laissez faire leadership style was far away from doctoral degree holders as well as from the postgraduate principals of the colleges. The education and leadership style were not related to each other.

Comparison of Leadership Styles of College Principals and Directors with Experience (number of years) on the Current Position

Table 9: Comparison of Leadership Styles of College Principals and Directors with Experience

Leadership Style	Experience on the current Position			
	1-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-15 yrs	more than 15 yrs
Transactional	27 (52%)	40 (36%)	18 (36%)	9 (29%)
Transformational	25 (48%)	69 (62%)	30 (60%)	19 (61%)
Laissez Faire	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	3 (10%)

Among principals and directors of institutes who have experience ranging from one to five years, transactional leadership style (52%) of leadership was preferred over transformational style (48%). Laissez faire style was not reported in this category. In the category of the principals having experience between five and ten years, transformational leadership style (62%) was dominant over transactional style (36%) of leadership. But in this category two percent of the respondents were reported to be following laissez faire style of leadership. Among principals having experience between ten and fifteen years, again transformational leadership style (60%) was more in practice than the transactional style (36%). Four percent of this category reported for the laissez faire style of leadership. Principals with more than fifteen years of experience were more comfortable with the transformational leadership style (61%) than the transactional leadership style (29%). Surprisingly in this category, laissez faire style of leadership surpassed all other categories with 10 percent count.

Table 10: Test of Independence between Style of Leadership and Experience

	4.437
Chi-square (Critical value)	12.592
DF	6
p-value	0.618
Alpha	0.05

Test interpretation

H0: Leadership styles and experience of the college principals are independent.

Ha: There is a link between leadership styles and experience of the college principals.

Table 10 reveals that the computed p-value is greater than the significance level $\alpha=0.05$, one cannot reject the null hypothesis H0.

Hence, the leadership style and experience are independent to each other.

Total inertia = 0.018

Table 12: Weights, Distances and Squared Distances to the Origin, Inertias and Relative Inertias (rows)

Leadership Style of Principals	Weight (relative)	Distance	Sq-Distance	Inertia	Relative inertia
Transactional	0.387	0.162	0.026	0.01017	0.557
Transformational	0.58	0.111	0.012	0.00721	0.395
Laissez Faire	0.033	0.163	0.027	0.00088	0.048

Table 12 establishes that transformational leadership style and transactional style were closer to each other.

Table 13: Weights, Distances and Squared Distances to the Origin, Inertias and Relative Inertias (columns)

	Transactional	Transformational	Laissez Faire
Transactional	0	0.273	0.189
Transformational	0.273	0	0.231
Laissez Faire	0.189	0.231	0

Results for the Experience

Table 14: Weights, Distances and Squared Distances to the Origin, Inertias and Relative Inertias (experience)

Experience of College Principals	Weight (relative)	Distance	Sq-Distance	Inertia	Relative inertia
1-5 yrs	0.222	0.239	0.057	0.013	0.698
5-10 yrs	0.453	0.062	0.004	0.002	0.094
10-15 yrs	0.206	0.064	0.004	0.001	0.046
more than 15 yrs	0.119	0.158	0.025	0.003	0.163

Table 14 shows the similarity among various categories of experience of college principals. Categories of 5-10 yrs

Table 11: Eigen Values and Percentages of Inertia

	F1	F2
Eigen value	0.017	0.001
Inertia (%)	95.699	4.301
Cumulative %	95.699	100.000

The eigen values correspond to the variance extracted by each factor.

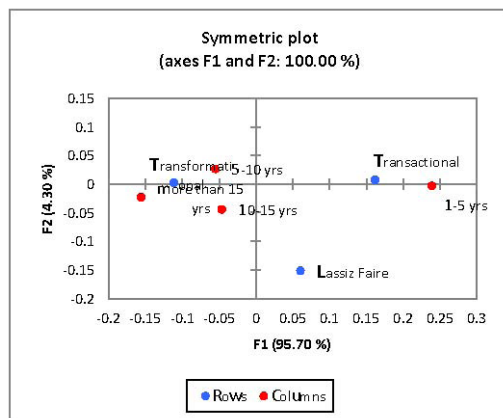
Table 13 exhibits values of principal coordinates and standard coordinates of the columns respectively. The standard coordinates are principal coordinates divided by the square root of the corresponding factor eigen value. The weighted sum-of-squares of the standard coordinates equals to one for each factor.

and 10-15 yrs are very much similar as compared to other categories.

Table 15: Principal Coordinates and Standard Coordinates of Columns

Experience	1-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-15 yrs	More than 15 yrs
1-5 yrs	0	0.296	0.289	0.396
5-10 yrs	0.296	0	0.071	0.112
10-15 yrs	0.289	0.071	0	0.112
More than 15 yrs	0.396	0.112	0.112	0

Table 15 exhibits values of the principal coordinates and standard coordinates of columns respectively. The standard coordinates are principal coordinates are divided by the square root of the corresponding factor eigen value. The weighted sum-of-squares of the standard coordinates equals to one for each factor.

**Fig. 2: Symmetric Plot**

In Fig. 2, transactional leadership appeared to be closer to the principals having experience of 1-5 years in the position. Principals with more than fifteen years of experience appear closer to transformational leadership style on the graph. Further transformational leadership is almost equidistant for principals and directors having 5-10 years and 10-15 years of experience. Laissez faire is far away from all the experience categories.

Findings

An interesting comparison was made by comparing education of the college principals and its effect on their leadership style. It was found that principals with doctoral degree did not differentiate between transformational leadership and transactional style of leadership. Surprisingly the laissez faire type of leadership style was

exhibited only by the doctoral respondents. Postgraduate principals made transformational leadership style as their first choice as compared to transactional leadership. Adam *et al.* (2009) showed that a transformational style of leadership was positively associated with interaction and network marketing. Passive/ avoidant leadership had no effect on any of the marketing practices. High percentage of transformational leadership style among doctorate principals may be attributed to educational background and experience. It is well supported by Richard & Jones Robert (1995) who in their survey of CEOs of US and Japanese subsidiaries located in North America established the perceived link between leadership style and cultural upbringing and education. Since with higher education and experience one becomes more aware about his colleagues, so he tends to believe in the abilities and sincerity. This fact was supported by Oshagbemi (2004) who maintained that age affects the style of leadership among the managers. He said that as the age progresses, the older managers tend to be more of participative kind of managers than the younger ones. On the contrary, both the older as well as younger managers tend to be similar on the directive and delegative leadership styles. Transformational leadership is normally shown by the persons who are well-enlightened and educated. Transformational leadership is shown by those who repose faith in their colleagues and subordinates. In case of college principals, this is obvious. This is supported by the work of Juan and Margarita (2008) which revealed that ratings of transformational leadership are associated with theory Y philosophy of management and a learning goal orientation, whereas ratings of transactional leadership were found to be associated with performance goal orientation. In addition, executives with higher levels of education reported greater behavioural integrity that was greater alignment between their managerial beliefs and their corresponding self-ratings of leadership behaviours. Many of the colleges started their operations only in the past few years so it was not surprising that transactional leadership style emerged as second most preferred style. College principals with less than five years of experience preferred transactional leadership style over transformational style. Principals with experience more than five year and up to ten years preferred transformational leadership style over transactional style. This trend was similar with principals having more than ten years of experience. Principals having more than fifteen years of experience were surprisingly having

laissez faire style of leadership too. But, their number was very less. When experience increases, one tends to be more into the mode of transformation than into instructions. Principals exhibiting laissez faire style of leadership may be those persons who had either retired from their first job or had taken up the second job in the fag end of their carrier. In government colleges the criteria for promotion is not merit but seniority. So some of the principals in the government colleges may prefer laissez faire style because there accountability is minimum and people are generally about to retire at this stage and they don't like to exercise any of their powers. Postgraduate principals had totally abstained from laissez faire style of leadership. Transactional style of leadership was found to be equally important in the current study. Majority of the colleges in the random sample were private colleges. These colleges were relatively new and were facing tough competition, so the transactional style of leadership was more obvious in those cases.

Conclusion

Transformational and transactional style of leadership emerged as the most common leadership styles among the college principals and directors. Laissez faire was the least common style of leadership. Style of leadership style didn't seem to have any relationship with the experience and educational background.

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